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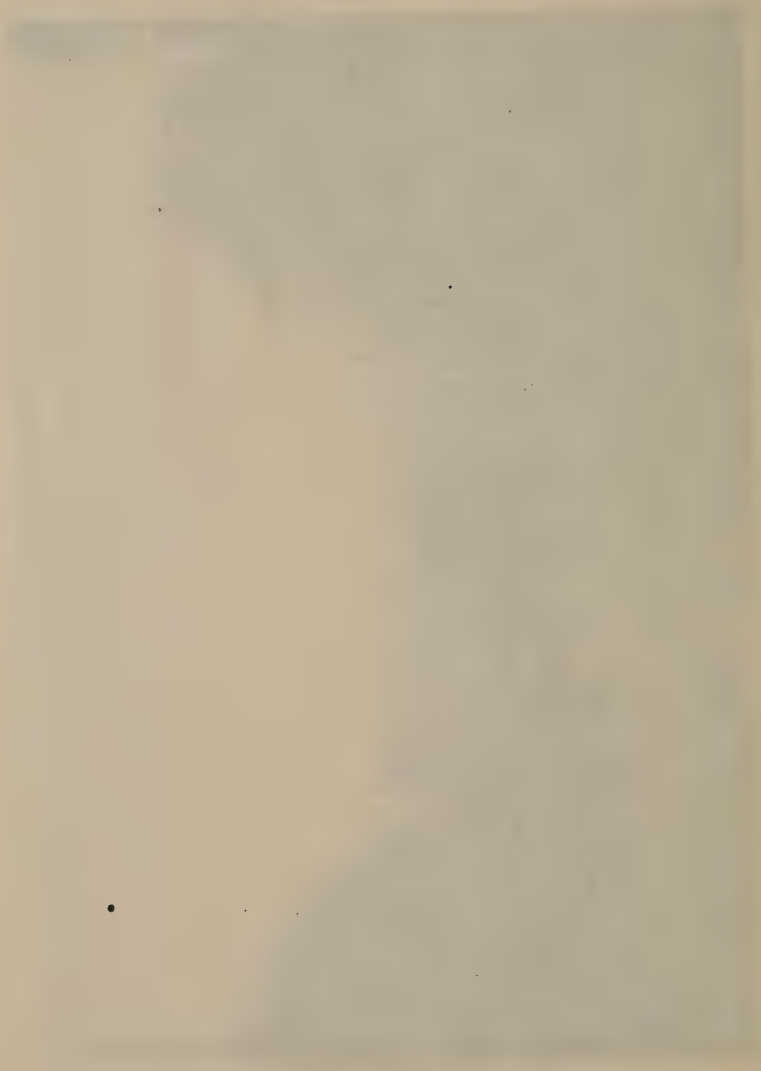
The Shakespeare Head Edition of the
Barsetshire Novels of Anthony Trollope
Edited by Michael Sadleir

In Fourteen Volumes
With Photographs of Barsetshire
by Charles S. Olcott

DOCTOR THORNE

Volume the First

'*The richest . . . purest style of Tudor architecture*'



DOCTOR THORNE

By Anthony Trollope

Volume the First

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DOCTOR THORNE

CHAPTER I

The Greshams of Greshamsbury

BEFORE the reader is introduced to the modest country medical practitioner who is to be the chief personage of the following tale, it will be well that he should be made acquainted with some particulars as to the locality in which, and the neighbours among whom, our doctor followed his profession.

There is a county in the west of England not so full of life, indeed, nor so widely spoken of as some of its manufacturing leviathan brethren in the north, but which is, nevertheless, very dear to those who know it well. Its green pastures, its waving wheat, its deep and shady and—let us add—dirty lanes, its paths and stiles, its tawny-coloured, well-built rural churches, its avenues of beeches, and frequent Tudor mansions, its constant county hunt, its social graces, and the general air of clanship which pervades it, has made it to its own inhabitants a favoured land of Goshen. It is purely agricultural; agricultural in its produce, agricultural in its poor, and agricultural in its pleasures. There are towns in it, of course; depôts from whence are brought seeds and groceries, ribbons and fire-shovels; in which markets are held and county balls are carried on; which return members to parliament, generally—in spite of reform bills, past, present, and coming—in accordance with the dictates of some neighbouring land magnate; from whence emanate the country postmen, and where is located the supply of post-horses necessary for county

visitings. But these towns add nothing to the importance of the county; they consist, with the exception of the assize-town, of dull, all but death-like, single streets. Each possesses two pumps, three hotels, ten shops, fifteen beer-houses, a beadle, and a market-place.

Indeed, the town population of the county reckons for nothing when the importance of the county is discussed, with the exception, as before said, of the assize-town, which is also a cathedral city. Herein is a clerical aristocracy, which is certainly not without its due weight. A resident bishop, a resident dean, an archdeacon, three or four resident prebendaries, and all their numerous chaplains, vicars, and ecclesiastical satellites, do make up a society sufficiently powerful to be counted as something by the county squirearchy. In other respects the greatness of Barsetshire depends wholly on the landed powers.

Barsetshire, however, is not now so essentially one whole as it was before the Reform Bill divided it. There is in these days an East Barsetshire, and there is a West Barsetshire; and people conversant with Barsetshire doings declare that they can already decipher some difference of feeling, some division of interests. The eastern moiety of the county is more purely conservative than the western; there is, or was, a taint of Peelism in the latter; and then, too, the residence of two such great Whig magnates as the Duke of Omnium and the Earl De Courcy in that locality in some degree overshadows and renders less influential the gentlemen who live near them.

It is to East Barsetshire that we are called. When the division above spoken of was first contemplated, in those stormy days in which gallant men were still combating reform ministers, if not with hope, still with spirit, the battle was fought by none more bravely than by John Newbold Gresham of Greshamsbury, the member for Barsetshire. Fate, however, and the Duke of Wellington were adverse, and in the following parliament John Newbold Gresham was only member for East Barsetshire.

Whether or not it was true, as stated at the time, that the aspect of the men with whom he was called on to associate at St. Stephen's broke his heart, it is not for us now to inquire. It is certainly true, that he did not live to see the first year of the reformed parliament brought to a close. The then Mr. Gresham was not an old man at the time of his death, and his eldest son, Francis Newbold Gresham, was a very young man; but, notwithstanding his youth, and notwithstanding other grounds of objection which stood in the way of such preferment, and which must be explained, he was chosen in his father's place. The father's services had been too recent, too well appreciated, too thoroughly in unison with the feelings of those around him to allow of any other choice; and in this way young Frank Gresham found himself member for East Barsetshire, although the very men who elected him knew that they had but slender ground for trusting him with their suffrages.

Frank Gresham, though then only twenty-four years of age, was a married man, and a father. He had already chosen a wife, and by his choice had given much ground of distrust to the men of East Barsetshire. He had married no other than Lady Arabella de Courcy, the sister of the great Whig earl who lived at Courcy Castle in the west; that earl who not only had voted for the Reform Bill, but had been infamously active in bringing over other young peers so to vote, and whose name therefore stank in the nostrils of the staunch Tory squires of the county.

Not only had Frank Gresham so wedded, but having thus improperly and unpatriotically chosen a wife, he had added to his sin by becoming recklessly intimate with his wife's relations. It is true that he still called himself a Tory, belonged to the club of which his father had been one of the most honoured members, and in the days of the great battle got his head broken in a row on the right side; but, nevertheless, it was felt by the good men, true and blue of East Barsetshire, that a constant sojourner at Courcy

Castle could not be regarded as a consistent Tory. When, however, his father died, that broken head served him in good stead; his sufferings in the cause were made the most of; these, in unison with his father's merits, turned the scale, and it was accordingly decided, at a meeting held at the George and Dragon at Barchester, that Frank Gresham should fill his father's shoes.

But Frank Gresham could not fill his father's shoes; they were too big for him. He did become member for East Barsetshire; but he was such a member—so lukewarm, so indifferent, so prone to associate with the enemies of the good cause, so little willing to fight the good fight, that he soon disgusted those who most dearly loved the memory of the old squire.

De Courcy Castle in those days had great allurements for a young man, and all those allurements were made the most of to win over young Gresham. His wife, who was a year or two older than himself, was a fashionable woman, with thorough Whig tastes and aspirations, such as became the daughter of a great Whig earl; she cared for politics, or thought that she cared for them, more than her husband did; for a month or two previous to her engagement she had been attached to the court, and had been made to believe that much of the policy of England's rulers depended on the political intrigues of England's women. She was one who would fain be doing something if she only knew how, and the first important attempt she made was to turn her respectable young Tory husband into a second-rate Whig bantling. As this lady's character will, it is hoped, show itself in the following pages, we need not now describe it more closely.

It is not a bad thing to be son-in-law to a potent earl, member of parliament for a county, and possessor of a fine old English seat, and a fine old English fortune. As a very young man, Frank Gresham found the life to which he was thus introduced agreeable enough. He consoled himself as best he might for the blue looks with which he was greeted

by his own party, and took his revenge by consorting more thoroughly than ever with his political adversaries. Foolishly, like a foolish moth, he flew to the bright light, and, like the moths, of course he burnt his wings. Early in 1833 he had become a member of parliament, and in the autumn of 1834 the dissolution came. Young members of three or four-and-twenty do not think much of dissolutions, forget the fancies of their constituents, and are too proud of the present to calculate much as to the future. So it was with Mr. Gresham. His father had been member for Barsetshire all his life, and he looked forward to similar prosperity as though it were part of his inheritance; but he failed to take any of the steps which had secured his father's seat.

In the autumn of 1834 the dissolution came, and Frank Gresham, with his honourable lady wife and all the De Courcys at his back, found that he had mortally offended the county. To his great disgust another candidate was brought forward as a fellow to his late colleague; and though he manfully fought the battle, and spent ten thousand pounds in the contest, he could not recover his position. A high Tory, with a great Whig interest to back him, is never a popular person in England. No one can trust him, though there may be those who are willing to place him, untrusted, in high positions. Such was the case with Mr. Gresham. There were many who were willing, for family considerations, to keep him in parliament; but no one thought that he was fit to be there. The consequences were, that a bitter and expensive contest ensued. Frank Gresham, when twitted with being a Whig, foreswore the De Courcy family; and then, when ridiculed as having been thrown over by the Tories, foreswore his father's old friends. So between the two stools he fell to the ground, and, as a politician, he never again rose to his feet.

He never again rose to his feet; but twice again he made violent efforts to do so. Elections in East Barsetshire, from various causes, came quick upon each other in those days,

and before he was eight-and-twenty years of age, Mr. Gresham had three times contested the county and been three times beaten. To speak the truth of him, his own spirit would have been satisfied with the loss of the first ten thousand pounds; but Lady Arabella was made of higher mettle. She had married a man with a fine place and a fine fortune; but she had nevertheless married a commoner, and had in so far derogated from her high birth. She felt that her husband should be by rights a member of the House of Lords; but, if not, that it was at least essential that he should have a seat in the lower chamber. She would by degrees sink into nothing if she allowed herself to sit down the mere wife of a mere country squire.

Thus instigated, Mr. Gresham repeated the useless contest three times, and repeated it each time at a serious cost. He lost his money, Lady Arabella lost her temper, and things at Greshamsbury went on by no means as prosperously as they had done in the days of the old squire.

In the first twelve years of their marriage, children came fast into the nursery at Greshamsbury. The first that was born was a boy; and in those happy halcyon days, when the old squire was still alive, great was the joy at the birth of an heir to Greshamsbury; bonfires gleamed through the country side, oxen were roasted whole, and the customary paraphernalia of joy usual to rich Britons on such occasions were gone through with wondrous *éclat*. But when the tenth baby, and the ninth little girl was brought into the world, the outward show of joy was not so great.

Then other troubles came on. Some of these little girls were sickly, some very sickly. Lady Arabella had her faults, and they were such as were extremely detrimental to her husband's happiness and her own; but that of being an indifferent mother was not among them. She had worried her husband daily for years because he was not in parliament, she had worried him because he would not re-furnish the house in Portman Square; she had worried him because he objected to have more people every winter

at Greshamsbury Park than the house would hold; but now she changed her tune and worried him because Selina coughed, because Helena was hectic, because poor Sophy's spine was weak, and Matilda's appetite was gone.

Worrying from such causes was pardonable it will be said. So it was; but the manner was hardly pardonable. Selina's cough was certainly not fairly attributable to the old-fashioned furniture in Portman Square; nor would Sophy's spine have been materially benefited by her father having a seat in parliament; and yet, to have heard Lady Arabella discussing those matters in family conclave, one would have thought that she would have expected such results.

As it was, her poor weak darlings were carried about from London to Brighton, from Brighton to some German baths, from the German baths back to Torquay, and thence,—as regarded the four we have named,—to that bourne from whence no further journey could be made under the Lady Arabella's directions.

The one son and heir to Greshamsbury was named as his father, Francis Newbold Gresham. He would have been the hero of our tale had not that place been preoccupied by the village doctor. As it is, those who please may so regard him. It is he who is to be our favourite young man, to do the love scenes, to have his trials and his difficulties, and to win through them or not, as the case may be. I am too old now to be a hard-hearted author, and so it is probable that he may not die of a broken heart. Those who don't approve of a middle-aged bachelor country doctor as a hero, may take the heir to Greshamsbury in his place, and call the book, if it so please them, "The Loves and Adventures of Francis Newbold Gresham the younger."

And Master Frank Gresham was not ill adapted for playing the part of a hero of this sort. He did not share his sisters' ill health, and though the only boy of the family, he excelled all his sisters in personal appearance. The Greshams from time immemorial had all been handsome. They

were broad-browed, blue-eyed, fair-haired, born with dimples in their chins, and that pleasant, aristocratic, dangerous curl of the upper lip, which can equally express good humour or scorn. Young Frank was every inch a Gresham, and was the darling of his father's heart.

The De Courcys had never been plain. There was too much hauteur, too much pride, we may perhaps even fairly say, too much nobility in their gait and manners, and even in their faces, to allow of their being considered plain; but they were not a race nurtured by Venus or Apollo. They were tall and thin, with high cheek-bones, high foreheads, and large, dignified, cold eyes. The De Courcy girls had all good hair; and, as they also possessed easy manners and powers of talking, they managed to pass in the world for beauties, till they were absorbed in the matrimonial market, and the world at large cared no longer whether they were beauties or not. The Misses Gresham were made in the De Courcy mould, and were not on this account the less dear to their mother.

The two eldest, Augusta and Beatrice, lived, and were apparently likely to live. The four next faded and died one after another—all in the same sad year—and were laid in the neat new cemetery at Torquay. Then came a pair, born at one birth, weak, delicate, frail little flowers, with dark hair and dark eyes, and thin, long, pale faces, with long, bony hands, and long, bony feet, whom men look on as fated to follow their sisters with quick steps. Hitherto, however, they had not followed them, nor had they suffered as their sisters had suffered; and some people at Greshamsbury attributed this to the fact that a change had been made in the family medical practitioner.

Then came the youngest of the flock, she whose birth we have said was not heralded with loud joy; for when she came into the world, four others, with pale temples, wan, worn cheeks, and skeleton white arms, were awaiting permission to leave it.

Such was the family when, in the year 1854, the eldest

son came of age. He had been educated at Harrow, and was now still at Cambridge; but, of course, on such a day as this he was at home. That coming of age must be a delightful time to a young man born to inherit broad acres and wide wealth. Those full-mouthed congratulations, those warm prayers with which his manhood is welcomed by the gray-haired seniors of the county, the affectionate, all but motherly caresses of neighbouring mothers who have seen him grow up from his cradle, of mothers who have daughters, perhaps, fair enough, and good enough, and sweet enough even for him; the soft-spoken, half-bashful, but tender greetings of the girls, who now, perhaps for the first time, call him by his stern family name, instructed by instinct rather than precept that the time has come when the familiar Charles or familiar John must by them be laid aside; the "lucky dogs," and hints of silver spoons which are poured into his ears as each young compeer slaps his back and bids him live a thousand years and then never die; the shouting of the tenantry, the good wishes of the old farmers who come up to wring his hand, the kisses which he gets from the farmers' wives, and the kisses which he gives to the farmers' daughters; all these things must make the twenty-first birthday pleasant enough to a young heir. To a youth, however, who feels that he is now liable to arrest, and that he inherits no other privilege, the pleasure may very possibly not be quite so keen.

The case with young Frank Gresham may be supposed to be much nearer the former than the latter; but yet the ceremony of his coming of age was by no means like that which fate had accorded to his father. Mr. Gresham was now an embarrassed man, and though the world did not know it, or, at any rate, did not know that he was deeply embarrassed, he had not the heart to throw open his mansion and park and receive the county with a free hand as though all things were going well with him.

Nothing was going well with him. Lady Arabella would allow nothing near him or round him to be well. Every-

thing with him now turned to vexation; he was no longer a joyous, happy man, and the people of East Barsetshire did not look for gala doings on a grand scale when young Gresham came of age.

Gala doings, to a certain extent, there were there. It was in July, and tables were spread under the oaks for the tenants. Tables were spread, and meat, and beer, and wine were there, and Frank, as he walked round and shook his guests by the hand, expressed a hope that their relations with each other might be long, close, and mutually advantageous.

We must say a few words now about the place itself. Greshamsbury Park was a fine old English gentleman's seat—was and is; but we can assert it more easily in past tense, as we are speaking of it with reference to a past time. We have spoken of Greshamsbury Park; there was a park so called, but the mansion itself was generally known as Greshamsbury House, and did not stand in the park. We may perhaps best describe it by saying that the village of Greshamsbury consisted of one long straggling street, a mile in length, which in the centre turned sharp round, so that one half of the street lay directly at right angles to the other. In this angle stood Greshamsbury House, and the gardens and grounds around it filled up the space so made. There was an entrance with large gates at each end of the village, and each gate was guarded by the effigies of two huge pagans with clubs, such being the crest borne by the family; from each entrance a broad road, quite straight, running through to a majestic avenue of limes, led up to the house. This was built in the richest, perhaps we should rather say in the purest, style of Tudor architecture, so much so that, though Greshamsbury is less complete than Longleat, less magnificent than Hatfield, it may in some sense be said to be the finest specimen of Tudor architecture of which the country can boast.

It stands amid a multitude of trim gardens and stone-built terraces, divided one from another. These to our eyes

are not so attractive as that broad expanse of lawn by which our country houses are generally surrounded; but the gardens of Greshamsbury have been celebrated for two centuries, and any Gresham who would have altered them would have been considered to have destroyed one of the well-known landmarks of the family.

Greshamsbury Park—properly so called—spread far away on the other side of the village. Opposite to each of the great gates leading up to the mansion was a smaller gate, the one opening on to the stables, kennels, and farm-yard, and the other to the deer park. This latter was the principal entrance to the demesne, and a grand and picturesque entrance it was. The avenue of limes which on one side stretched up to the house, was on the other extended for a quarter of a mile, and then appeared to be terminated only by an abrupt rise in the ground. Here there were four savages and four clubs, two to each portal, and what with the massive iron gates, surmounted by a stone wall, on which stood the family arms supported by two other club-bearers, the stone-built lodges, the Doric, ivy-covered columns which surrounded the circle, the four grim savages, and the extent of the space itself through which the high road ran, and which just abutted on the village, the spot was sufficiently significant of old family greatness.

Those who examined it more closely might see that under the arms was a scroll bearing the Gresham motto, and that the words were repeated in smaller letters under each of the savages. "Gardez Gresham," had been chosen in the days of motto-choosing probably by some herald-at-arms as an appropriate legend for signifying the peculiar attributes of the family. Now, however, unfortunately, men were not of one mind as to the exact idea signified. Some declared, with much heraldic warmth, that it was an address to the savages, calling on them to take care of their patron; while others, with whom I myself am inclined to agree, averred with equal certainty that it was an advice to

the people at large, especially to those inclined to rebel against the aristocracy of the county, that they should "beware the Gresham." The latter signification would betoken strength—so said the holders of this doctrine—the former weakness. Now the Greshams were ever a strong people, and never addicted to a false humility.

We will not pretend to decide the question. Alas! either construction was now equally unsuited to the family fortunes. Such changes had taken place in England since the Greshams had founded themselves that no savage could any longer in any way protect them; they must protect themselves like common folk, or live unprotected. Nor now was it necessary that any neighbour should shake in his shoes when the Gresham frowned. It would have been to be wished that the present Gresham himself could have been as indifferent to the frowns of some of his neighbours.

But the old symbols remained, and may such symbols long remain among us; they are still lovely and fit to be loved. They tell us of the true and manly feelings of other times; and to him who can read aright, they explain more fully, more truly, than any written history can do, how Englishmen have become what they are. England is not yet a commercial country in the sense in which that epithet is now used for her; and let us still hope that she will not soon become so. She might surely as well be called feudal England, or chivalrous England. If in western civilised Europe there does exist a nation among whom there are high signors, and with whom the owners of the land are the true aristocracy, the aristocracy that is trusted as being best and fittest to rule, that nation is the English. Choose out the ten leading men of each great European people. Choose them in France, in Austria, Sardinia, Prussia, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Spain (?), and then select the ten in England whose names are best known as those of leading statesmen; the result will show in which country there still exists the closest attachment to, the sincerest trust in, the old feudal and now so-called landed interests.

England a commercial country! Yes; as Venice was. She may excel other nations in commerce, but yet it is not that in which she most prides herself, in which she most excels. Merchants as such are not the first men among us; though it perhaps be open, barely open, to a merchant to become one of them. Buying and selling is good and necessary; it is very necessary, and may, possibly, be very good; but it cannot be the noblest work of man; and let us hope that it may not in our time be esteemed the noblest work of an Englishman.

Greshamsbury Park was very large; it lay on the outside of the angle formed by the village street, and stretched away on two sides without apparent limit or boundaries visible from the village road or house. Indeed, the ground on this side was so broken up into abrupt hills, and conical-shaped, oak-covered excrescences, which were seen peeping up through and over each other, that the true extent of the park was much magnified to the eye. It was very possible for a stranger to get into it and to find some difficulty in getting out again by any of its known gates; and such was the beauty of the landscape, that a lover of scenery would be tempted thus to lose himself.

I have said that on one side lay the kennels, and this will give me an opportunity of describing here one especial episode, a long episode, in the life of the existing squire. He had once represented his county in parliament, and when he ceased to do so he still felt an ambition to be connected in some peculiar way with that county's greatness; he still desired that Gresham of Greshamsbury should be something more in East Barsetshire than Jackson of the Grange, or Baker of Mill Hill, or Bateson of Annesgrove. They were all his friends, and very respectable country gentlemen; but Gresham of Greshamsbury should be more than this; even he had enough of ambition to be aware of such a longing. Therefore, when an opportunity occurred he took to hunting the county.

For this employment he was in every way well suited—

unless it was in the matter of finance. Though he had in his very earliest, manly years given such great offence by his indifference to his family politics, and had in a certain degree fostered the ill-feeling by contesting the county in opposition to the wishes of his brother squires, nevertheless, he bore a loved and popular name. Men regretted that he should not have been what they wished him to be, that he should not have been such as was the old squire; but when they found that such was the case, that he could not be great among them as a politician, they were still willing that he should be great in any other way if there were county greatness for which he was suited. Now he was known as an excellent horseman, as a thorough sportsman, as one knowing in dogs, and tender hearted as a sucking mother to a litter of young foxes; he had ridden in the county since he was fifteen, had a fine voice for a view halloo, knew every hound by name, and could wind a horn with sufficient music for all hunting purposes; moreover, he had come to his property, as was well known through all Barsetshire, with a clear income of fourteen thousand a year.

Thus, when some old worn-out master of hounds was run to ground, about a year after Mr. Gresham's last contest for the county, it seemed to all parties to be a pleasant and rational arrangement that the hounds should go to Greshamsbury. Pleasant, indeed, to all except the Lady Arabella; and rational, perhaps, to all except, the squire himself.

All this time he was already considerably encumbered. He had spent much more than he should have done, and so indeed had his wife, in those two splendid years in which they had figured as great among the great ones of the earth. Fourteen thousand a year ought to have been enough to allow a member of parliament with a young wife and two or three children to live in London and keep up their country family mansion; but then the De Courcys were very great people, and Lady Arabella chose to live as she had been accustomed to do, and as her sister-in-law the

countess lived: now Lord De Courcy had much more than fourteen thousand a-year. Then came the three elections, with their vast attendant cost, and then those costly expedients to which gentlemen are forced to have recourse who have lived beyond their income, and find it impossible so to reduce their establishments as to live much below it. Thus when the hounds came to Greshamsbury, Mr. Gresham was already a poor man.

Lady Arabella said much to oppose their coming; but Lady Arabella, though it could hardly be said of her that she was under her husband's rule, certainly was not entitled to boast that she had him under hers. She then made her first grand attack as to the furniture in Portman Square; and was then for the first time specially informed that the furniture there was not matter of much importance, as she would not in future be required to move her family to that residence during the London seasons. The sort of conversations which grew from such a commencement may be imagined. Had Lady Arabella worried her lord less, he might perhaps have considered with more coolness the folly of encountering so prodigious an increase to the expense of his establishment; had he not spent so much money in a pursuit which his wife did not enjoy, she might perhaps have been more sparing in her rebukes as to his indifference to her London pleasures. As it was, the hounds came to Greshamsbury, and Lady Arabella did go to London for some period in each year, and the family expenses were by no means lessened.

The kennels, however, were now again empty. Two years previous to the time at which our story begins, the hounds had been carried off to the seat of some richer sportsman. This was more felt by Mr. Gresham than any other misfortune which he had yet incurred. He had been master of hounds for ten years, and that work he had at any rate done well. The popularity among his neighbours which he had lost as a politician he had regained as a sportsman, and he would fain have remained autocratic in the

hunt had it been possible. But he so remained much longer than he should have done, and at last they went away, not without signs and sounds of visible joy on the part of Lady Arabella.

But we have kept the Greshamsbury tenantry waiting under the oak-trees by far too long. Yes; when young Frank came of age there was still enough left at Greshamsbury, still means enough at the squire's disposal, to light one bonfire, to roast, whole in its skin, one bullock. Frank's virility came on him not quite unmarked, as that of the parson's son might do, or the son of the neighbouring attorney. It could still be reported in The Barsetshire Conservative Standard that "The beards wagged all" at Greshamsbury, now as they had done for many centuries on similar festivals. Yes; it was so reported. But this, like so many other such reports, had but a shadow of truth in it. "They poured the liquor on," certainly, those who were there; but the beards did not wag as they had been wont to wag in former years. Beards won't wag for the telling. The squire was at his wits' end for money, and the tenants one and all had so heard. Rents had been raised on them; timber had fallen fast; the lawyer on the estate was growing rich; tradesmen in Barchester, nay, in Greshamsbury itself, were beginning to mutter; and the squire himself would not be merry. Under such circumstances the throats of a tenantry will still swallow, but their beards will not wag.

"I minds well," said farmer Oaklerath to his neighbour, "when the squoire hisself comed of age. Lord love 'ee! there was fun going that day. There was more yale drank then than's been brewed at the big house these two years. T'old squoire was a one'er."

"And I minds when squoire was borned,—minds it well," said an old farmer sitting opposite. "Them was the days! It a'nt that long ago neither. Squoire a'nt come o' fifty yet; no, nor a'nt nigh it, though he looks it. Things be altered at Greemsbury"—such was the rural pronunciation—"altered sadly, neebor Oaklerath. Well, well; I'll

soon be gone, I will, and so it an't no use talking; but arter paying one pound fifteen for them acres for more nor fifty year, I didn't think I'd ever be axed for forty shilling."

Such was the style of conversation which went on at the various tables. It had certainly been of a very different tone when the squire was born, when he came of age, and when, just two years subsequently, his son had been born. On each of these events similar rural fêtes had been given, and the squire himself had on these occasions been frequent among his guests. On the first, he had been carried round by his father, a whole train of ladies and nurses following. On the second, he had himself mixed in all the sports, the gayest of the gay, and each tenant had squeezed his way up to the lawn to get a sight of the Lady Arabella, who, as was already known, was to come from Courcy Castle to Greshamsbury to be their mistress. It was little they any of them cared now for the Lady Arabella. On the third, he himself had borne his child in his arms as his father had before borne him; he was then in the zenith of his pride, and though the tenantry whispered that he was somewhat less familiar with them than of yore, that he had put on somewhat too much of the De Courcy airs, still he was their squire, their master, the rich man in whose hand they lay. The old squire was then gone, and they were proud of the young member and his lady bride in spite of a little hauteur. They were none of them proud of him now.

He walked once round among the guests, and spoke a few words of welcome at each table; and as he did so the tenants got up and bowed and wished health to the old squire, happiness to the young one, and prosperity to Greshamsbury. Nevertheless, it was but a tame affair.

There were also other visitors, of the gentle sort, to do honour to the occasion; but not such swarms, not such a crowd at the mansion itself and at the houses of the neighbouring gentry as had always been collected on these former gala doings. Indeed, the party at Greshamsbury was not a large one, and consisted chiefly of Lady de

Courcy and her suite. Lady Arabella still kept up, as far as she was able, her close connection with Courcy Castle. She was there as much as possible, to which Mr. Gresham never objected; and she took her daughters there whenever she could, though, as regarded the two elder girls, she was often interfered with by Mr. Gresham, and not unfrequently by the girls themselves. Lady Arabella had a pride in her son, though he was by no means her favourite child. He was, however, the heir of Greshamsbury, of which fact she was disposed to make the most, and he was also a fine gainly open-hearted young man who could not but be dear to any mother. Lady Arabella did love him dearly, though she felt a sort of disappointment in regard to him, seeing that he was not so much like a De Courcy as he should have been. She did love him dearly; and, therefore, when he came of age she got her sister-in-law and all the Ladies Amelia, Rosina, &c., to come to Greshamsbury; and she also, with some difficulty persuaded the Honourable Georges and the Honourable Johns to be equally condescending. Lord de Courcy himself was in attendance at the court—or said that he was—and Lord Porlock, the eldest son, simply told his aunt when he was invited that he never bored himself with those sort of things.

Then there were the Bakers, and the Batesons, and the Jacksons, who all lived near and returned home at night; there was the Reverend Caleb Oriel, the high-church rector, with his beautiful sister, Patience Oriel; there was Mr. Yates Umbleby, the attorney and agent; and there was Dr. Thorne, and the doctor's modest, quiet-looking little niece, Miss Mary.

CHAPTER II

Long, Long Ago

AS Dr. Thorne is our hero—or I should rather say my hero, a privilege of selecting for themselves in this respect being left to all my readers—and as Miss Mary Thorne is to be our heroine, a point on which no choice whatsoever is left to any one, it is necessary that they shall be introduced and explained and described in a proper, formal manner. I quite feel that an apology is due for beginning a novel with two long dull chapters full of description. I am perfectly aware of the danger of such a course. In so doing I sin against the golden rule which requires us all to put our best foot foremost, the wisdom of which is fully recognised by novelists, myself among the number. It can hardly be expected that anyone will consent to go through with a fiction that offers so little of allurement in its first pages; but twist it as I will I cannot do otherwise. I find that I cannot make poor Mr. Gresham hem and haw and turn himself uneasily in his arm-chair in a natural manner till I have said why he is uneasy. I cannot bring in my doctor speaking his mind freely among the big wigs till I have explained that it is in accordance with his usual character to do so. This is unartistic on my part, and shows want of imagination as well as want of skill. Whether or not I can atone for these faults by straightforward, simple plain story telling—that, indeed, is very doubtful.

Dr. Thorne belonged to a family in one sense as good, and at any rate as old, as that of Mr. Gresham;—and much older he was apt to boast than that of the De Courcys. This trait in his character is mentioned first, as it was the weakness for which he was most conspicuous. He was second cousin to Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, a Barsetshire squire living in the neighbourhood of Barchester, and who boasted that his estate had remained in his family, descend-

ing from Thorne to Thorne, longer than had been the case with any other estate or any other family in the county.

But Dr. Thorne was only a second cousin; and, therefore, though he was entitled to talk of the blood as belonging to some extent to himself, he had no right to lay claim to any position in the county other than such as he might win for himself if he chose to locate himself in it. This was a fact of which no one was more fully aware than our doctor himself. His father, who had been first cousin of a former squire Thorne, had been a clerical dignitary in Barchester, but had been dead now many years. He had had two sons; one he had educated as a medical man, but the other, and the younger, whom he had intended for the bar, had not betaken himself in any satisfactory way to any calling. This son had been first rusticated from Oxford, and then expelled; and thence returning to Barchester, had been the cause to his father and brother of much suffering.

Old Dr. Thorne, the clergyman, died when the two brothers were yet young men, and left behind him nothing but some household and other property of the value of about two thousand pounds, which he bequeathed to Thomas, the elder son, much more than that having been spent in liquidating debts contracted by the younger. Up to that time there had been close harmony between the Ullathorne family and that of the clergyman; but a month or two before the doctor's death—the period of which we are speaking was about two-and-twenty years before the commencement of our story—the then Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne had made it understood, that he would no longer receive at his house his cousin Henry, whom he regarded as a disgrace to the family.

Fathers are apt to be more lenient to their sons than uncles to their nephews, or cousins to each other. Dr. Thorne still hoped to reclaim his black sheep, and thought that the head of his family showed an unnecessary harshness in putting an obstacle in his way of doing so. And if the father was warm in support of his profligate son, the young

medical aspirant was warmer in support of his profligate brother. Dr. Thorne, junior, was no *roué* himself, but perhaps, as a young man, he had not sufficient abhorrence of his brother's vices. At any rate, he stuck to him manfully; and when it was signified in the Close that Henry's company was not considered desirable at Ullathorne, Dr. Thomas Thorne sent word to the squire, that under such circumstances his visits there would also cease.

This was not very prudent, as the young Galen had elected to establish himself in Barchester, very mainly in expectation of the help which his Ullathorne connexion would give him. This, however, in his anger he failed to consider; he was never known, either in early or in middle life, to consider in his anger those points which were probably best worth his consideration. This, perhaps, was of the less moment as his anger was of an unenduring kind, evaporating frequently with more celerity than he could get the angry words out of his mouth. With the Ullathorne people, however, he did establish a quarrel sufficiently permanent to be of vital injury to his medical prospects.

And then the father died, and the two brothers were left living together with very little means between them. At this time there were living, in Barchester, people of the name of Scatcherd. Of that family, as then existing, we have only to do with two, a brother and a sister. They were in a low rank of life, the one being a journeyman stone-mason and the other an apprentice to a straw-bonnet maker, but they were, nevertheless, in some sort remarkable people. The sister was reputed in Barchester to be a model of female beauty of the strong and robuster cast, and had also a better reputation as being a girl of good character and honest womanly conduct. Both of her beauty and of her reputation her brother was exceedingly proud, and he was the more so when he learnt that she had been asked in marriage by a decent master-tradesman in the city.

Roger Scatcherd had also a reputation, but not for beauty or propriety of conduct. He was known for the best

stone-mason in the four counties, and as the man who could, on occasions, drink the most alcohol in a given time in the same localities. As a workman, indeed, he had higher repute even than this: he was not only a good and a very quick stone-mason, but he had also a capacity of turning other men into good stone-masons: he had a gift of knowing what a man could and should do; and, by degrees, he taught himself what five, and ten, and twenty—latterly, what a thousand and two thousand men might accomplish among them: this, also, he did with very little aid from pen and paper, with which he was not, and never became, very conversant. He had also other gifts and other propensities. He could talk in a manner dangerous to himself and others; he could persuade without knowing that he did so; and being himself an extreme demagogue, in those noisy times just prior to the Reform Bill, he created a hubbub in Barchester of which he himself had had no previous conception.

Henry Thorne among his other bad qualities had one which his friends regarded as worse than all the others, and which perhaps justified the Ullathorne people in their severity. He loved to consort with low people. He not only drank—that might have been forgiven—but he drank in tap-rooms with vulgar drinkers; so said his friends, and so said his enemies. He denied the charge as being made in the plural number, and declared that his only low co-reveller was Roger Scatcherd. With Roger Scatcherd, at any rate, he associated, and became as democratic as Roger was himself. Now the Thornes of Ullathorne were of the very highest order of Tory excellence.

Whether or not Mary Scatcherd at once accepted the offer of the respectable tradesman, I cannot say. After the occurrence of certain events which must be here shortly told, she declared that she never had done so. Her brother averred that she most positively had. The respectable tradesman himself refused to speak on the subject.

It is certain, however, that Scatcherd, who had hitherto been silent enough about his sister in those social hours

which he passed with his gentleman friend, boasted of the engagement when it was, as he said, made; and then boasted also of the girl's beauty. Scatcherd, in spite of his occasional intemperance, looked up in the world, and the coming marriage of his sister was, he thought, suitable to his own ambition for his family.

Henry Thorne had already heard of, and already seen, Mary Scatcherd; but hitherto she had not fallen in the way of his wickedness. Now, however, when he heard that she was to be decently married, the devil tempted him to tempt her. It boots not to tell all the tale. It came out clearly enough when all was told, that he made her most distinct promises of marriage; he even gave her such in writing; and having in this way obtained from her her company during some of her little holidays—her Sundays or summer evenings—he seduced her. Scatcherd accused him openly of having intoxicated her with drugs; and Thomas Thorne, who took up the case, ultimately believed the charge. It became known in Barchester that she was with child, and that the seducer was Henry Thorne.

Roger Scatcherd, when the news first reached him, filled himself with drink, and then swore that he would kill them both. With manly wrath, however, he set forth first against the man, and that with manly weapons. He took nothing with him but his fists and a big stick as he went in search of Henry Thorne.

The two brothers were then lodging together at a farm-house close abutting on the town. This was not an eligible abode for a medical practitioner; but the young doctor had not been able to settle himself eligibly since his father's death; and wishing to put what constraint he could upon his brother, had so located himself. To this farm-house came Roger Scatcherd one sultry summer evening, his anger gleaming from his blood-shot eyes, and his rage heightened to madness by the rapid pace at which he had run from the city, and by the ardent spirits which were fermenting within him.

At the very gate of the farm-yard, standing placidly with his cigar in his mouth, he encountered Henry Thorne. He had thought of searching for him through the whole premises, of demanding his victim with loud exclamations, and making his way to him through all obstacles. In lieu of that, there stood the man before him.

"Well, Roger, what's in the wind?" said Henry Thorne.

They were the last words he ever spoke. He was answered by a blow from the blackthorn. A contest ensued, which ended in Scatcherd keeping his word; at any rate as regarded the worst offender. How the fatal blow on the temples was struck was never exactly determined: one medical man said it might have been done in a fight with a heavy-headed stick; another thought that a stone had been used; a third suggested a stone-mason's hammer. It seemed, however, to be proved subsequently that no hammer was taken out, and Scatcherd himself persisted in declaring that he had taken in his hand no weapon but the stick. Scatcherd, however, was drunk; and even though he intended to tell the truth may have been mistaken. There were, however, the facts that Thorne was dead; that Scatcherd had sworn to kill him about an hour previously; and that he had without delay accomplished his threat. He was arrested and tried for murder: all the distressing circumstances of the case came out on the trial: he was found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to be imprisoned for six months. Our readers will probably think that the punishment was too severe.

Thomas Thorne and the farmer were on the spot soon after Henry Thorne had fallen. The brother was at first furious for vengeance against his brother's murderer; but, as the facts came out, as he learnt what had been the provocation given, what had been the feelings of Scatcherd when he left the city determined to punish him who had ruined his sister, his heart was changed. Those were trying days for him. It behoved him to do what in him lay to cover his brother's memory from the obloquy which it deserved;

it behoved him also to save, or to assist to save, from undue punishment the unfortunate man who had shed his brother's blood; it behoved him also, at least so he thought, to look after that poor fallen one whose misfortunes were less merited than those either of his brother or of hers.

And he was not the man to get through these things lightly, or with as much ease as he perhaps might conscientiously have done. He would pay for the defence of the prisoner; he would pay for the defence of his brother's memory; and he would pay for the poor girl's comforts. He would do this, and he would allow no one to help him. He stood alone in the world, and insisted on so standing. Old Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne offered again to open his arms to him; but Thomas Thorne had conceived a foolish idea that his cousin's severity had driven his brother on to his bad career, and he would consequently accept no kindness from Ullathorne. Miss Thorne, the old squire's daughter—a cousin considerably older than himself, to whom he had at one time been much attached—sent him money; and he returned it to her under a blank cover. He had still enough for those unhappy purposes which he had in hand. As to what might happen afterwards he was then mainly indifferent.

The affair made much noise in the county, and was inquired into closely by many of the county magistrates; by none more closely than by John Newbold Gresham, who was then alive. Mr. Gresham was greatly taken with the energy and justice shown by Dr. Thorne on the occasion; and when the trial was over he invited him to Greshamsbury. The visit ended in the doctor establishing himself in that village.

We must return for a moment to Mary Scatcherd. She was saved from the necessity of encountering her brother's wrath, for that brother was under arrest for murder before he could get at her. Her immediate lot, however, was a cruel one. Deep as was her cause for anger against the man who had so inhumanly used her, still it was natural that

she should turn to him with love rather than with aversion. To whom else could she in such plight look for love? When, therefore, she heard that he was slain, her heart sank within her; she turned her face to the wall, and laid herself down to die; to die a double death, for herself and the fatherless babe that was now quick within her.

But, in fact, life had still much to offer both to her and to her child. For her it was still destined that she should, in a distant land, be the worthy wife of a good husband, and the happy mother of many children. For that embryo one it was destined—but that may not be so quickly told: to describe her destiny these volumes have yet to be written.

Even in those bitterest days God tempered the wind to the shorn lamb. Dr. Thorne was by her bedside soon after the bloody tidings had reached her, and did for her more than either her lover or her brother could have done. When the baby was born Scatcherd was still in prison, and had still three months more confinement to undergo. The story of her great wrongs and cruel usage was much talked of, and men said that one who had been so injured should be regarded as having in no wise sinned at all.

One man, at any rate, so thought. At twilight, one evening, Thorne was surprised by a visit from a demure Barchester hardware dealer, whom he did not remember ever to have addressed before. This was the former lover of poor Mary Scatcherd. He had a proposal to make; and it was this. If Mary would consent to leave the country at once, to leave it without notice from her brother, or talk or *éclat* on the matter, he would sell all that he had, marry her, and emigrate. There was but one other condition; she must leave her baby behind her. The hardwareman could find it in his heart to be generous, to be generous and true to his love; but he could not be generous enough to father the seducer's child.

"I could never abide it, sir, if I took it," said he; "and she, why in course she would always love it the best."

In praising his generosity, who can mingle any censure

for such manifest prudence? He would still make her the wife of his bosom, defiled in the eyes of the world as she had been; but she must be to him the mother of his own children, not the mother of another's child.

And now again our doctor had a hard task to win through. He saw at once that it was his duty to use his utmost authority to induce the poor girl to accept such an offer. She liked the man; and here was opened to her a course which would have been most desirable even before her misfortune. But it is hard to persuade a mother to part with her first babe; harder, perhaps, when the babe has been so fathered and so born than when the world has shone brightly on its earliest hours. She at first refused stoutly: she sent a thousand loves, a thousand thanks, profusest acknowledgments for his generosity to the man who showed her that he loved her so well; but Nature, she said, would not let her leave her child.

"And what will you do for her here, Mary?" said the doctor. Poor Mary replied to him with a deluge of tears.

"She is my niece," said the doctor, taking up the tiny infant in his huge hands; "she is already the nearest thing, the only thing I have in this world. I am her uncle, Mary. If you will go with this man I will be father to her and mother to her. Of what bread I eat, she shall eat; of what cup I drink, she shall drink. See, Mary, here is the Bible;" and he covered the book with his hand. "Leave her to me, and by this word she shall be my child."

The mother consented at last;—left her baby with the doctor, married, and went to America. All this was consummated before Roger Scatcherd was liberated from gaol. Some conditions the doctor made. The first was, that Scatcherd should not know that his sister's child was thus disposed of. Dr. Thorne, in undertaking to bring up the baby, did not choose to encounter any tie with persons who might hereafter claim to be the girl's relations on the other side. Relations she would undoubtedly have had none had she been left to live or die as a workhouse

bastard; but should the doctor succeed in life, should he ultimately be able to make this girl the darling of his own house, and then the darling of some other house, should she live and win the heart of some man whom the doctor might delight to call his friend and nephew; then relations might spring up whose ties would not be advantageous.

No man plumed himself on good blood more than Dr. Thorne; no man had greater pride in his genealogical tree, and his hundred and thirty clearly-proved descents from MacAdam; no man had a stronger theory as to the advantage held by men who have grandfathers over those who have none, or have none worth talking about. Let it not be thought that our doctor was a perfect character. No, indeed; most far from perfect. He had within him an inner, stubborn, self-admiring pride, which made him believe himself to be better and higher than those around him, and this from some unknown cause which he could hardly explain to himself. He had a pride in being a poor man of a high family; he had a pride in repudiating the very family of which he was proud; and he had a special pride in keeping his pride silently to himself. His father had been a Thorne, and his mother a Thorold. There was no better blood to be had in England. It was in the possession of such properties as these that he condescended to rejoice; this man, with a man's heart, a man's courage, and a man's humanity! Other doctors round the county had ditch water in their veins; he could boast of a pure ichor, to which that of the great Omnium family was but a muddy puddle. 'Twas thus that he loved to excel his brother practitioners, he who might have indulged in the pride of excelling them both in talent and in energy! We speak now of his early days; but even in his maturer life, the man, though mellowed, was the same.

This was the man who now promised to take to his bosom as his own child a poor bastard whose father was already dead, and whose mother's family was such as the Scatcherds'! It was necessary that the child's history should

be known to none. Except to the mother's brother it was an object of interest to no one. The mother had for some short time been talked of; but now the nine days' wonder was a wonder no longer. She went off to her far-away home; her husband's generosity was duly chronicled in the papers, and the babe was left untalked of and unknown.

It was easy to explain to Scatcherd that the child had not lived. There was a parting interview between the brother and sister in the gaol, during which, with real tears and unaffected sorrow, the mother thus accounted for the offspring of her shame. Then she started, fortunate in her coming fortunes; and the doctor took with him his charge to the new country in which they were both to live. There he found for her a fitting home till she should be old enough to sit at his table and live in his bachelor house; and no one but old Mr. Gresham knew who she was, or whence she had come.

Then also Roger Scatcherd, having completed his six months' confinement, came out of prison.

Roger Scatcherd, though his hands were now red with blood, was to be pitied. A short time before the days of Henry Thorne's death he had married a young wife in his own class of life, and had made many resolves, that henceforward his conduct should be such as might become a married man, and might not disgrace the respectable brother-in-law he was about to have given him. Such was his condition when he first heard of his sister's plight. As has been said, he filled himself with drink and started off on the scent of blood.

During his prison days his wife had to support herself as she might. The decent articles of furniture which they had put together were sold; she gave up their little house, and, bowed down by misery, she also was brought near to death. When he was liberated he at once got work; but those who have watched the lives of such people know how hard it is for them to recover lost ground. She became a mother immediately after his liberation, and when her

child was born they were in direst want; for Scatcherd was again drinking, and his resolves were blown to the wind.

The doctor was then living at Greshamsbury. He had gone over there before the day on which he undertook the charge of poor Mary's baby, and soon found himself settled as the Greshamsbury doctor. This occurred very soon after the birth of the young heir. His predecessor in this career had "bettered" himself, or endeavoured to do so, by seeking the practice of some large town, and Lady Arabella, at a very critical time, was absolutely left with no other advice than that of a stranger, picked up, as she declared to Lady de Courcy, somewhere about Barchester gaol, or Barchester court-house, she did not know which.

Of course Lady Arabella could not suckle the young heir herself. Ladies Arabella never can. They are gifted with the powers of being mothers, but not nursing-mothers. Nature gives them bosoms for show, but not for use. So Lady Arabella had a wet nurse. At the end of six months the new doctor found that Master Frank was not doing quite so well as he should do; and after a little trouble it was discovered that the very excellent young woman who had been sent express from Courcy Castle to Greshamsbury—a supply being kept up on the lord's demesne for the family use—was fond of brandy. She was at once sent back to the castle, of course; and as Lady de Courcy was too much in dudgeon to send another, Dr. Thorne was allowed to procure one. He thought of the misery of Roger Scatcherd's wife, thought also of her health, and strength, and active habits; and thus Mrs. Scatcherd became foster-mother to young Frank Gresham.

One other episode we must tell of past times. Previous to his father's death, Dr. Thorne was in love. Nor had he altogether sighed and pleaded in vain; though it had not quite come to that, that the young lady's friends, or even the young lady herself, had actually accepted his suit. At that time his name stood well in Barchester. His father was a prebendary; his cousins and his best friends were the

Thornes of Ullathorne, and the lady, who shall be nameless, was not thought to be injudicious in listening to the young doctor. But when Henry Thorne went so far astray, when the old doctor died, when the young doctor quarrelled with Ullathorne, when the brother was killed in a disgraceful quarrel, and it turned out that the physician had nothing but his profession, and no settled locality in which to exercise it; then, indeed, the young lady's friends thought that she *was* injudicious, and the young lady herself had not spirit enough, or love enough, to be disobedient. In those stormy days of the trial she told Dr. Thorne, that perhaps it would be wise that they should not see each other any more.

Dr. Thorne, so counselled, at such a moment—so informed then, when he most required comfort from his love, at once swore loudly that he agreed with her. He rushed forth with a bursting heart, and said to himself that the world was bad, all bad. He saw the lady no more; and, if I am rightly informed, never again made matrimonial ventures to any one.

CHAPTER III

Dr. Thorne

AND thus Dr. Thorne became settled for life in the little village of Greshamsbury. As was then the wont with many country practitioners, and as should be the wont with them all if they consulted their own dignity a little less and the comforts of their customers somewhat more, he added the business of a dispensing apothecary to that of physician. In doing so, he was of course much reviled. Many people around him declared that he could not truly be a doctor, or, at any rate, a doctor to be so called; and his brethren in the art living around him, though they knew that his diplomas, degrees, and certificates were all *en règle*, rather countenanced the report. There was much about this new comer which did not endear him to his own profession. In the first place, he was a new comer, and, as such, was of course to be regarded by other doctors as being *de trop*. Greshamsbury was only fifteen miles from Barchester, where there was a regular depôt of medical skill, and but eight from Silverbridge, where a properly-established physician had been in residence for the last forty years. Dr. Thorne's predecessor at Greshamsbury had been a humble-minded general practitioner, gifted with a due respect for the physicians of the county; and he, though he had been allowed to physic the servants, and sometimes the children at Greshamsbury, had never had the presumption to put himself on a par with his betters.

Then, also, Dr. Thorne, though a graduated physician, though entitled beyond all dispute to call himself a doctor, according to all the laws of all the colleges, made it known to the East Barsetshire world, very soon after he had seated himself at Greshamsbury, that his rate of pay was to be seven-and-sixpence a visit within a circuit of five miles, with a proportionally-increased charge at proportionally-

increased distances. Now there was something low, mean, unprofessional, and democratic in this; so, at least, said the children of Æsculapius gathered together in conclave at Barchester. In the first place, it showed that this Thorne was always thinking of his money, like an apothecary, as he was; whereas, it would have behoved him, as a physician, had he had the feelings of a physician under his hat, to have regarded his own pursuits in a purely philosophical spirit, and to have taken any gain which might have accrued as an accidental adjunct to his station in life. A physician should take his fee without letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing; it should be taken without a thought, without a look, without a move of the facial muscles; the true physician should hardly be aware that the last friendly grasp of the hand had been made more precious by the touch of gold. Whereas, that fellow Thorne would lug out half-a-crown from his breeches' pocket and give it in change for a ten-shilling piece. And then it was clear that this man had no appreciation of the dignity of a learned profession. He might constantly be seen compounding medicines in the shop, at the left hand of his front door; not making experiments philosophically in materia medica for the benefit of coming ages—which, if he did, he should have done in the seclusion of his study, far from profane eyes—but positively putting together common powders for rural bowels, or spreading vulgar ointments for agricultural ailments.

A man of this sort was not fit society for Dr. Fillgrave of Barchester. That must be admitted. And yet he had been found to be fit society for the old squire of Greshamsbury, whose shoe ribbons Dr. Fillgrave would not have objected to tie; so high did the old squire stand in the county just previous to his death. But the spirit of the Lady Arabella was known by the medical profession of Barsetshire, and when that good man died it was felt that Thorne's short tenure of Greshamsbury favour was already over. The Barsetshire regulars were, however, doomed to disap-

pointment. Our doctor had already contrived to endear himself to the heir; and though there was not even then much personal love between him and the Lady Arabella, he kept his place at the great house unmoved, not only in the nursery and in the bedrooms, but also at the squire's dining-table.

Now there was in this, it must be admitted, quite enough to make him unpopular among his brethren; and this feeling was soon shown in a marked and dignified manner. Dr. Fillgrave, who had certainly the most respectable professional connexion in the county, who had a reputation to maintain, and who was accustomed to meet, on almost equal terms, the great medical baronets from the metropolis at the houses of the nobility, Dr. Fillgrave declined to meet Dr. Thorne in consultation. He exceedingly regretted, he said, most exceedingly, the necessity which he felt of doing so: he had never before had to perform so painful a duty; but, as a duty which he owed to his profession, he must perform it. With every feeling of respect for Lady ———, a sick guest at Greshamsbury,—and for Mr. Gresham, he must decline to attend in conjunction with Dr. Thorne. If his services could be made available under any other circumstances, he would go to Greshamsbury as fast as post-horses could carry him.

Then, indeed, there was war in Barsetshire. If there was on Dr. Thorne's cranium one bump more developed than another, it was that of combativeness. Not that the doctor was a bully, or even pugnacious, in the usual sense of the word; he had no disposition to provoke a fight, no propense love of quarrelling; but there was that in him which would allow him to yield to no attack. Neither in argument nor in contest would he ever allow himself to be wrong; never at least to anyone but to himself; and on behalf of his special hobbies, he was ready to meet the world at large.

It will therefore be understood, that when such a gauntlet was thus thrown in his very teeth by Dr. Fillgrave, he was not slow to take it up. He addressed a letter to the

Barsetshire Conservative Standard, in which he attacked Dr. Fillgrave with some considerable acerbity. Dr. Fillgrave responded in four lines, saying, that on mature consideration he had made up his mind not to notice any remarks that might be made on him by Dr. Thorne in the public press. The Greshamsbury doctor then wrote another letter, more witty and much more severe than the last; and as this was copied into the Bristol, Exeter, and Gloucester papers, Dr. Fillgrave found it very difficult to maintain the magnanimity of his silence. It is sometimes becoming enough for a man to wrap himself in the dignified toga of silence, and proclaim himself indifferent to public attacks; but it is a sort of dignity which it is very difficult to maintain. As well might a man, when stung to madness by wasps, endeavour to sit in his chair without moving a muscle, as endure with patience and without reply the courtesies of a newspaper opponent. Dr. Thorne wrote a third letter, which was too much for medical flesh and blood to bear. Dr. Fillgrave answered it, not, indeed, in his own name, but in that of a brother doctor; and then the war raged merrily. It is hardly too much to say that Dr. Fillgrave never knew another happy hour. Had he dreamed of what materials was made that young compounder of doses at Greshamsbury he would have met him in consultation, morning, noon, and night, without objection; but, having begun the war, he had no alternative to going on with it: his brethren would allow him no alternative. Thus he was continually being brought up to the fight, as a prize-fighter may be seen to be, who is carried up to round after round, without any hope on his own part, and who, in each round, drops to the ground before the very wind of his opponent's blows.

But Dr. Fillgrave, though thus weak himself, was backed in practice and in countenance by nearly all his brethren in the county. The guinea fee, the principle of *giving* advice and of selling no medicine, the great resolve to keep a distinct barrier between the physician and the

apothecary, and, above all, the hatred of the contamination of a bill, were strong in the medical mind of Barsetshire. Dr. Thorne had the provincial medical world against him, and so he appealed to the metropolis. The Lancet took the matter up in his favour, but the Journal of Medical Science was against him; the Weekly Chirurgeon, noted for its medical democracy, upheld him as a medical prophet, but the Scalping Knife, a monthly periodical got up in dead opposition to the Lancet, showed him no mercy. So the war went on, and our doctor, to a certain extent, became a noted character.

He had, moreover, other difficulties to encounter in his professional career. It was something in his favour that he understood his business; something that he was willing to labour at it with energy; and resolved to labour at it conscientiously. He had also other gifts, such as conversational brilliancy, an aptitude for true good fellowship, firmness in friendship, and general honesty of disposition, which stood him in stead as he advanced in life. But, at his first starting, much that belonged to himself personally was against him. Let him enter what house he would, he entered it with a conviction, often expressed to himself, that he was equal as a man to the proprietor, equal as a human being to the proprietress. To age he would allow deference, and to special recognised talent—at least, so he said; to rank, also, he would pay that respect which was its clear recognised prerogative; he would let a lord walk out of a room before him if he did not happen to forget it; in speaking to a duke he would address him as his grace; and he would in no way assume a familiarity with bigger men than himself, allowing to the bigger man the privilege of making the first advances. But beyond this he would admit that no man should walk the earth with head higher than his own.

He did not talk of these things much; he offended no rank by boasts of his own equality; he did not absolutely tell the Earl de Courcy in words, that the privilege of dining

at Courcy Castle was to him no greater than the privilege of dining at Courcy Parsonage; but there was that in his manner that told it. The feeling in itself was perhaps good, and was certainly much justified by the manner in which he bore himself to those below him in rank; but there was folly in the resolution to run counter to the world's recognised rules on such matters; and much absurdity in his mode of doing so, seeing that at heart he was a thorough Conservative. It is hardly too much to say that he naturally hated a lord at first sight; but, nevertheless, he would have expended his means, his blood, and spirit, in fighting for the upper house of parliament.

Such a disposition, until it was thoroughly understood, did not tend to ingratiate him with the wives of the country gentlemen among whom he had to look for practice. And then, also, there was not much in his individual manner to recommend him to the favour of ladies. He was brusque, authoritative, given to contradiction, rough, though never dirty in his personal belongings, and inclined to indulge in a sort of quiet raillery which sometimes was not thoroughly understood. People did not always know whether he was laughing at them or with them; and some people were, perhaps, inclined to think that a doctor should not laugh at all when called in to act doctorially.

When he was known, indeed, when the core of the fruit had been reached, when the huge proportions of that loving, trusting heart had been learned, and understood, and appreciated, when that honesty had been recognised, that manly, and almost womanly tenderness had been felt, then indeed the doctor was acknowledged to be adequate to his profession. To trifling ailments he was too often brusque; seeing that he accepted money for the cure of such, he should, we may say, have cured them without an offensive manner. So far he is without defence. But to real suffering no one found him brusque; no patient lying painfully on a bed of sickness ever thought him rough.

Another misfortune was, that he was a bachelor. Ladies

think, and I, for one, think that ladies are quite right in so thinking, that doctors should be married men. All the world feels that a man when married acquires some of the attributes of an old woman—he becomes, to a certain extent, a motherly sort of being; he acquires a conversance with women's ways and women's wants, and loses the wilder and offensive sparks of his virility. It must be easier to talk to such a one about Matilda's stomach, and the growing pains in Fanny's legs, than to a young bachelor. This impediment also stood much in Dr. Thorne's way during his first years at Greshamsbury.

But his wants were not at first great; and though his ambition was perhaps high, it was not of an impatient nature. The world was his oyster; but, circumstanced as he was, he knew it was not for him to open it with his lancet all at once. He had bread to earn, which he must earn wearily; he had a character to make, which must come slowly; it satisfied his soul that, in addition to his immortal hopes, he had a possible future in this world to which he could look forward with clear eyes, and advance with a heart that would know no fainting.

On his first arrival at Greshamsbury he had been put by the squire into a house, which he still occupied when that squire's grandson came of age. There were two decent commodious private houses in the village—always excepting the rectory, which stood grandly in its own grounds, and, therefore, was considered as ranking above the village residences; of these two Dr. Thorne had the smaller. They stood exactly at the angle before described, on the outer side of it, and at right angles with each other. They both possessed good stables and ample gardens; and it may be as well to specify, that Mr. Umbleby, the agent and lawyer to the estate, occupied the larger one.

Here Dr. Thorne lived for eleven or twelve years, all alone; and then for ten or eleven more with his niece, Mary Thorne. Mary was thirteen when she came to take up her permanent abode as mistress of the establishment

—or, at any rate, to act as the only mistress which the establishment possessed. This advent greatly changed the tenor of the doctor's ways. He had been before pure bachelor; not a room in his house had been comfortably furnished: he at first commenced in a make-shift sort of way, because he had not at his command the means of commencing otherwise; and he had gone on in the same fashion, because the exact time had never come at which it was imperative in him to do otherwise. He had had no fixed hour for his meals, no fixed place for his books, no fixed wardrobe for his clothes. He had a few bottles of good wine in his cellar, and occasionally asked a brother bachelor to take a chop with him; but beyond this he had touched very little on the cares of house keeping. A slop-bowl full of strong tea, together with bread, and butter, and eggs, was produced for him in the morning, and he expected that at whatever hour he might arrive in the evening, some food should be presented to him wherewith to satisfy the cravings of Nature; if, in addition to this, he had another slop-bowl of tea in the evening, he got all that he ever required, or all, at least, that he ever demanded.

But when Mary came, or rather when she was about to come, things were altogether changed at the doctor's. People had hitherto wondered—and especially Mrs. Umbleby—how a gentleman like Dr. Thorne could continue to live in so slovenly a manner; and now people again wondered, and again especially Mrs. Umbleby, how the doctor could possibly think it necessary to put such a lot of furniture into his house because a little chit of a girl of twelve years of age was coming to live with him.

Mrs. Umbleby had great scope for her wonder. The doctor made a thorough revolution in his household, and furnished his house from the ground to the roof completely. He painted—for the first time since the commencement of his tenantcy—he papered, he carpeted, and curtained, and mirrored, and linened, and blanketed, as though a Mrs. Thorne with a good fortune were coming home to-

morrow; and all for a girl of twelve years old. "And how," said Mrs. Umbleby, to her friend Miss Gushing, "how did he find out what to buy?" as though the doctor had been brought up like a wild beast, ignorant of the nature of tables and chairs, and with no more developed ideas of drawing-room drapery than a hippopotamus.

To the utter amazement of Mrs. Umbleby and Miss Gushing, the doctor did it all very well. He said nothing about it to anyone,—he never did say much about such things,—but he furnished his house well and discreetly; and when Mary Thorne came home from her school at Bath, to which she had been taken some six years previously, she found herself called upon to be the presiding genius of a perfect paradise.

It has been said that the doctor had managed to endear himself to the new squire before the old squire's death, and that, therefore, the change at Greshamsbury had had no professional ill effects upon him. Such was the case at the time; but, nevertheless, all did not go on smoothly in the Greshamsbury medical department. There were six or seven years' difference in age between Mr. Gresham and the doctor, and, moreover, Mr. Gresham was young for his age, and the doctor old; but, nevertheless, there was a very close attachment between them early in life. This was never thoroughly sundered, and, backed by this, the doctor did maintain himself for some years before the fire of Lady Arabella's artillery. But drops falling, if they fall constantly, will bore through a stone.

Dr. Thorne's pretensions, mixed with his subversive professional democratic tendencies, his seven-and-six-penny visits, added to his utter disregard of Lady Arabella's airs, were too much for her spirit. He brought Frank through his first troubles, and that at first ingratiated her; he was equally successful with the early dietary of Augusta and Beatrice; but, as his success was obtained in direct opposition to the Courcy Castle nursery principles, this hardly did much in his favour. When the third daughter

was born, he at once declared that she was a very weakly flower, and sternly forbade the mother to go to London. The mother, loving her babe, obeyed; but did not the less hate the doctor for the order, which she firmly believed was given at the instance and express dictation of Mr. Gresham. Then another little girl came into the world, and the doctor was more imperative than ever as to the nursery rules and the excellence of country air. Quarrels were thus engendered, and Lady Arabella was taught to believe that this doctor of her husband's was after all no Solomon. In her husband's absence she sent for Dr. Fillgrave, giving very express intimation that he would not have to wound either his eyes or dignity by encountering his enemy; and she found Dr. Fillgrave a great comfort to her.

Then Dr. Thorne gave Mr. Gresham to understand, that, under such circumstances, he could not visit professionally at Greshamsbury any longer. The poor squire saw there was no help for it, and though he still maintained his friendly connexion with his neighbour, the seven-and-sixpenny visits were at an end. Dr. Fillgrave from Barchester, and the apothecary at Silverbridge, divided the responsibility between them, and the nursery principles of Courcy Castle were again in vogue at Greshamsbury.

So things went on for years, and those years were years of sorrow. We must not ascribe to our doctor's enemies the sufferings, and sickness, and deaths that occurred. The four frail little ones that died would probably have been taken had Lady Arabella been more tolerant of Dr. Thorne. But the fact was, that they did die; and that the mother's heart then got the better of the woman's pride, and Lady Arabella humbled herself before Dr. Thorne. She humbled herself, or would have done so, had the doctor permitted her. But he, with his eyes full of tears, stopped the utterance of her apology, took her two hands in his, pressed them warmly, and assured her that his joy in returning would be great, for the love that he bore to all that belonged to Greshamsbury. And so the seven-and-

sixpenny visits were recommenced; and the great triumph of Dr. Fillgrave came to an end.

Great was the joy in the Greshamsbury nursery when the second change took place. Among the doctor's attributes, not hitherto mentioned, was an aptitude for the society of children. He delighted to talk to children, and to play with them. He would carry them on his back, three or four at a time, roll with them on the ground, race with them in the gardens, invent games for them, contrive amusements in circumstances which seemed quite adverse to all manner of delight; and, above all, his physic was not nearly so nasty as that which came from Silverbridge.

He had a great theory as to the happiness of children; and though he was not disposed altogether to throw over the precepts of Solomon,—always bargaining that he should, under no circumstances, be himself the executioner—he argued that the principal duty which a parent owed to a child was to make him happy. Not only was the man to be made happy,—the future man, if that might be possible,—but the existing boy was to be treated with equal favour; and his happiness, so said the doctor, was of much easier attainment.

"Why struggle after future advantage at the expense of present pain, seeing that the results were so very doubtful?" Many an opponent of the doctor had thought to catch him on the hip when so singular a doctrine was broached; but they were not always successful. "What," said his sensible enemies, "is Johnny not to be taught to read because he does not like it?" "Johnny must read by all means," would the doctor answer; "but is it necessary that he should not like it? If the preceptor have it in him, may not Johnny learn, not only to read, but to like to learn to read?"

"But," would say the enemies, "children must be controlled." "And so must men also," would say the doctor. "I must not steal your peaches, nor make love to your wife, nor libel your character. Much as I might wish through my

natural depravity to indulge in such vices, I am debarred from them without pain, and I may almost say without unhappiness."

And so the argument went on, neither party convincing the other. But, in the meantime, the children of the neighbourhood became very fond of Dr. Thorne.

Dr. Thorne and the squire were still fast friends, but circumstances had occurred, spreading themselves now over a period of many years, which almost made the poor squire uneasy in the doctor's company. Mr. Gresham owed a large sum of money, and he had, moreover, already sold a portion of his property. Unfortunately it had been the pride of the Greshams that their acres had descended from one to another without an entail, so that each possessor of Greshamsbury had had full power to dispose of the property as he pleased. Any doubt as to its going to the male heir had never hitherto been felt. It had occasionally been encumbered by charges for younger children; but these charges had been liquidated, and the property had come down without any burden to the present squire. Now a portion of this had been sold, and it had been sold to a certain degree through the agency of Dr. Thorne.

This made the squire an unhappy man. No man loved his family name and honour, his old family blazon and standing more thoroughly than he did: he was every whit a Gresham in heart, but his spirit had been weaker than that of his forefathers; and in his days, for the first time, the Greshams were to go to the wall! Ten years before the beginning of our story it had been necessary to raise a large sum of money to meet and pay off pressing liabilities, and it was found that this could be done with more material advantage by selling a portion of the property than in any other way. A portion of it, about a third of the whole in value, was accordingly sold.

Boxall Hill lay half way between Greshamsbury and Barchester, and was known as having the best partridge-shooting in the county; as having on it also a celebrated

fox cover, Boxall Gorse, held in very high repute by Barsetshire sportsmen. There was no residence on the immediate estate, and it was altogether divided from the remainder of the Greshamsbury property. This, with many inward and outward groans, Mr. Gresham permitted to be sold.

It was sold, and sold well, by private contract to a native of Barchester, who, having risen from the world's ranks, had made for himself great wealth. Somewhat of this man's character must hereafter be told; it will suffice to say that he relied for advice in money matters upon Dr. Thorne, and that at Dr. Thorne's suggestion he had purchased Boxall Hill, partridge shooting and gorse cover all included. He had not only bought Boxall Hill, but had subsequently lent the squire large sums of money on mortgage, in all which transactions the doctor had taken part. It had therefore come to pass, that Mr. Gresham was not unfrequently called on to discuss his money affairs with Dr. Thorne, and occasionally to submit to lectures and advice which might perhaps as well have been omitted.

So much for Dr. Thorne. A few words must still be said about Miss Mary before we rush into our story; the crust will then have been broken, and the pie will be open to the guests. Little Miss Mary was kept at a farm-house till she was six; she was then sent to school at Bath, and transplanted to the doctor's newly-furnished house a little more than six years after that. It must not be supposed that he had lost sight of his charge during her earlier years. He was much too well aware of the nature of the promise which he had made to the departing mother to do that. He had constantly visited his little niece, and long before the first twelve years of her life were over had lost all consciousness of his promise, and of his duty to the mother, in the stronger ties of downright personal love for the only creature that belonged to him.

When Mary came home the doctor was like a child in his glee. He prepared surprises for her with as much fore-

thought and trouble as though he were contriving mines to blow up an enemy. He took her first into the shop, and then to the kitchen, thence to the dining-rooms, after that to his and her bed-rooms, and so on till he came to the full glory of the new drawing-room, enhancing the pleasure by little jokes, and telling her that he should never dare to come into the last paradise without her permission, and not then till he had taken off his boots. Child as she was, she understood the joke, and carried it on like a little queen; and so they soon became the firmest of friends.

But though Mary was a queen, it was still necessary that she should be educated. Those were the earlier days in which Lady Arabella had humbled herself, and to show her humility she invited Mary to share the music lessons of Augusta and Beatrice at the great house. A music master from Barchester came over three times a-week, and remained for three hours, and if the doctor chose to send his girl over, she could pick up what was going without doing any harm. So said the Lady Arabella. The doctor, with many thanks and with no hesitation, accepted the offer, merely adding, that he had perhaps better settle separately with Signor Cantabili, the music master. He was very much obliged to Lady Arabella for giving his little girl permission to join her lessons to those of the Miss Greshams.

It need hardly be said that the Lady Arabella was on fire at once. Settle with Signor Cantabili! No, indeed; she would do that; there must be no expense whatever incurred in such an arrangement on Miss Thorne's account! But here, as in most things, the doctor carried his point. It being the time of the lady's humility, she could not make as good a fight as she would otherwise have done; and thus she found, to her great disgust, that Mary Thorne was learning music in her school-room on equal terms, as regarded payment, with her own daughters. The arrangement having been made could not be broken, especially as the young lady in nowise made herself disagreeable; and

more especially as the Miss Greshams themselves were very fond of her.

And so Mary Thorne learnt music at Greshamsbury, and with her music she learnt other things also: how to behave herself among girls of her own age; how to speak and talk as other young ladies do; how to dress herself, and how to move and walk. All which, she, being quick to learn, learnt without trouble at the great house. Something also she learnt of French, seeing that the Greshamsbury French governess was always in the room.

And then, some few years later, there came a rector, and a rector's sister; and with the latter Mary studied German, and French also. From the doctor himself she learnt much; the choice, namely, of English books for her own reading, and habits of thought somewhat akin to his own, though modified by the feminine softness of her individual mind.

And so Mary Thorne grew up and was educated. Of her personal appearance it certainly is my business as an author to say something. She is my heroine, and, as such, must necessarily be very beautiful; but, in truth, her mind and inner qualities are more clearly distinct to my brain than her outward form and features. I know that she was far from being tall, and far from being showy; that her feet and hands were small and delicate; that her eyes were bright when looked at, but not gleaming so as to make their brilliancy palpably visible to all around her; her hair was dark brown, and worn very plainly brushed from her forehead; her lips were thin, and her mouth, perhaps, in general inexpressive, but when she was eager in conversation it would show itself to be animated with curves of wondrous energy; and, quiet as she was in manner, sober and demure as was her usual settled appearance, she could talk, when the fit came on her, with an energy which in truth surprised those who did not know her; ay, and sometimes those who did. Energy! nay, it was occasionally a concentration of passion, which left her for the moment perfectly uncon-

scious of all other cares but solicitude for that subject which she might then be advocating.

All her friends, including the doctor, had at times been made unhappy by this vehemence of character; but yet it was to that very vehemence that she owed it that all her friends so loved her. It had once nearly banished her in early years from the Greshamsbury school-room; and yet it ended in making her claim to remain there so strong, that Lady Arabella could no longer oppose it, even when she had the wish to do so.

A new French governess had lately come to Greshamsbury, and was, or was to be, a great pet with Lady Arabella, having all the great gifts with which a governess can be endowed, and being also a *protégée* from the castle. The castle, in Greshamsbury parlance, always meant that of Courcy. Soon after this a valued little locket belonging to Augusta Gresham was missing. The French governess had objected to its being worn in the school-room, and it had been sent up to the bed-room by a young servant-girl, the daughter of a small farmer on the estate. The locket was missing, and after a while, a considerable noise in the matter having been made, was found, by the diligence of the governess, somewhere among the belongings of the English servant. Great was the anger of Lady Arabella, loud were the protestations of the girl, mute the woe of her father, piteous the tears of her mother, inexorable the judgment of the Greshamsbury world. But something occurred, it matters now not what, to separate Mary Thorne in opinion from that world at large. Out she then spoke, and to her face accused the governess of the robbery. For two days Mary was in disgrace almost as deep as that of the farmer's daughter. But she was neither quiet nor dumb in her disgrace. When Lady Arabella would not hear her, she went to Mr. Gresham. She forced her uncle to move in the matter. She gained over to her side, one by one, the potentates of the parish, and ended by bringing Mam'selle Larron down on her knees with a confession

of the facts. From that time Mary Thorne was dear to the tenantry of Greshamsbury; and specially dear at one small household, where a rough-spoken father of a family was often heard to declare, that for Miss Mary Thorne he'd face man or magistrate, duke or devil.

And so Mary Thorne grew up under the doctor's eye, and at the beginning of our tale she was one of the guests assembled at Greshamsbury on the coming of age of the heir, she herself having then arrived at the same period of her life.

CHAPTER IV

Lessons from Courcy Castle

IT was the first of July, young Frank Gresham's birthday, and the London season was not yet over; nevertheless, Lady de Courcy had managed to get down into the country to grace the coming of age of the heir, bringing with her all the Ladies Amelia, Rosina, Margaretta, and Alexandrina, together with such of the Honourable Johns and Georges as could be collected for the occasion.

The Lady Arabella had contrived this year to spend ten weeks in town, which, by a little stretching, she made to pass for the season; and had managed, moreover, at last to refurnish, not ingloriously, the Portman-square drawing-room. She had gone up to London under the pretext, imperatively urged, of Augusta's teeth—young ladies' teeth are not unfrequently of value in this way—and having received authority for a new carpet, which was really much wanted, had made such dexterous use of that sanction as to run up an upholsterer's bill of six or seven hundred pounds. She had of course had her carriage and horses; the girls of course had gone out; it had been positively necessary to have a few friends in Portman-square; and, alto-

gether, the ten weeks had not been unpleasant, and not inexpensive.

For a few confidential minutes before dinner, Lady de Courcy and her sister-in-law sat together in the latter's dressing-room, discussing the unreasonableness of the squire, who had expressed himself with more than ordinary bitterness as to the folly—he had probably used some stronger word—of these London proceedings.

"Heavens!" said the countess, with much eager animation; "what can the man expect? What does he wish you to do?"

"He would like to sell the house in London, and bury us all here for ever. Mind I was there only for ten weeks."

"Barely time for the girls to get their teeth properly looked at! But, Arabella, what does he say?" Lady de Courcy was very anxious to learn the exact truth of the matter, and ascertain, if she could, whether Mr. Gresham was really as poor as he pretended to be.

"Why, he said yesterday that he would have no more going to town at all; that he was barely able to pay the claims made on him, and keep up the house here, and that he would not—"

"Would not what?" asked the countess.

"Why, he said that he would not utterly ruin poor Frank."

"Ruin Frank?"

"That's what he said."

"But, surely, Arabella, it is not so bad as that? What possible reason can there be for him to be in debt?"

"He is always talking of those elections."

"But, my dear, Boxall Hill paid all that off. Of course Frank will not have such an income as there was when you married into the family. We all know that; and whom will he have to thank but his father? But Boxall Hill paid all those debts, and why should there be any difficulty now?"

"It was those nasty dogs, Rosina," said the Lady Arabella, almost in tears.

"Well, I for one never approved of the hounds coming to Greshamsbury. When a man has once involved his property he should not incur any expenses that are not absolutely necessary. That is a golden rule which Mr. Gresham ought to have remembered. Indeed, I put it to him nearly in those very words;—but Mr. Gresham never did, and never will receive with common civility anything that comes from me."

"I know, Rosina, he never did; and yet where would he have been but for the De Courcys?" So exclaimed, in her gratitude, the Lady Arabella; to speak truth, however, but for the De Courcys, Mr. Gresham might have been at this moment on the top of Boxall Hill, monarch of all he surveyed.

"As I was saying," continued the countess, "I never approved of the hounds coming to Greshamsbury; but yet, my dear, the hounds can't have eaten up everything. A man with ten thousand a-year ought to be able to keep hounds; particularly as he had a subscription."

"He says the subscription was little or nothing."

"That's nonsense, my dear. Now, Arabella, what does he do with his money?—that's the question. Does he gamble?"

"Well," said Lady Arabella, very slowly, "I don't think he does." If the squire did gamble, he must have done it very slyly, for he rarely went away from Greshamsbury, and certainly very few men looking like gamblers were in the habit of coming thither as guests. "I don't think he does gamble." Lady Arabella put her emphasis on the word gamble, as though her husband, if he might perhaps be charitably acquitted of that vice, was certainly guilty of every other known in the civilized world.

"I know he used," said Lady de Courcy, looking very wise, and rather suspicious. She certainly had sufficient domestic reasons for disliking the propensity; "I know he used;—and when a man begins, he is hardly ever cured."

"Well, if he does, I don't know it," said the Lady Arabella.

"The money, my dear, must go somewhere. What excuse does he give when you tell him you want this and that —all the common necessaries of life, that you have always been used to?"

"He gives no excuse; sometimes he says the family is so large."

"Nonsense! Girls cost nothing. There's only Frank, and he can't have cost anything yet. Can he be saving money to buy back Boxall Hill?"

"Oh, no," said the Lady Arabella quickly. "He is not saving anything; he never did, and never will save, though he is so stingy to me. He *is* hard pushed for money, I know that."

"Then where has it gone?" said the Countess de Courcy, with a look of stern decision.

"Heaven only knows! Now Augusta is to be married, I must of course have a few hundred pounds. You should have heard how he groaned when I asked him for it. Heaven only knows where the money goes!" And the injured wife wiped a piteous tear from her eye with her fine dress cambric handkerchief. "I have all the sufferings and privations of a poor man's wife, but I have none of the consolations. He has no confidence in me; he never tells me anything. He never talks to me about his affairs. If he talks to any one it is to that horrid doctor."

"What! Dr. Thorne?" Now the Countess de Courcy hated Dr. Thorne with a holy hatred.

"Yes, Dr. Thorne. I believe that he knows everything; and advises everything, too. Whatever difficulties poor Gresham may have, I do believe Dr. Thorne has brought them about. I do believe it, Rosina."

"Well, that is surprising. Mr. Gresham, with all his faults, is a gentleman; and how he can talk about his affairs with a low apothecary like that, I, for one, cannot imagine. Lord de Courcy has not always been to me all that he

should have been; far from it,"—and Lady de Courcy thought over in her mind injuries of a much graver description than any that her sister-in-law had ever suffered;—"but I have never known anything like that at Courcy Castle. Surely Umbleby knows all about it, doesn't he?"

"Not half so much as the doctor," said Lady Arabella.

The countess shook her head slowly: the idea of Mr. Gresham, a country gentleman of good estate like him, making a confidant of a country doctor was too great a shock for her nerves; and for awhile she was constrained to sit silent before she could recover herself.

"One thing at any rate is certain, Arabella," said the countess, as soon as she found herself again sufficiently composed to offer counsel in a properly dictatorial manner. "One thing at any rate is certain; if Mr. Gresham be involved so deeply as you say, Frank has but one duty before him: he must marry money. The heir of fourteen thousand a-year may indulge himself in looking for blood, as Mr. Gresham did, my dear"—it must be understood that there was very little compliment in this, as the Lady Arabella had always conceived herself to be a beauty—"or for beauty, as some men do," continued the countess, thinking of the choice that the present Earl de Courcy had made; "but Frank must marry money. I hope he will understand this early. Do make him understand this before he makes a fool of himself: when a man thoroughly understands this, when he knows what his circumstances require, why, the matter becomes easy to him. I hope that Frank understands that he has no alternative. In his position he must marry money."

But, alas! alas! Frank Gresham had already made a fool of himself.

"Well, my boy, I wish you joy with all my heart," said the Honourable John, slapping his cousin on the back, as he walked round to the stable-yard with him before dinner, to inspect a setter puppy of peculiarly fine breed

which had been sent to Frank as a birthday present. "I wish I were an elder son; but we can't all have that luck."

"Who wouldn't sooner be the younger son of an earl than the eldest son of a plain squire?" said Frank, wishing to say something civil in return for his cousin's civility.

"I wouldn't for one," said the Honourable John. "What chance have I? There's Porlock's as strong as a horse; and then George comes next. And the governor's good for these twenty years." And the young man sighed as he reflected what small hope there was that all those who were nearest and dearest to him should die out of his way, and leave him to the sweet enjoyment of an earl's coronet and fortune. "Now, you're sure of your game some day; and as you've no brothers, I suppose the squire'll let you do pretty well what you like. Besides, he's not so strong as my governor, though he's younger."

Frank had never looked at his fortune in this light before, and was so slow and green that he was not much delighted at the prospect now that it was offered to him. He had always, however, been taught to look to his cousins, the De Courcys, as men with whom it would be very expedient that he should be intimate; he therefore showed no offence, but changed the conversation.

"Shall you hunt with the Barsetshire's this next season, John? I hope you will; I shall."

"Well, I don't know. It's very slow. It's all tillage here, or else woodland. I rather fancy I shall go to Leicestershire when the partridge shooting is over. What sort of a lot do you mean to come out with, Frank?"

Frank became a little red as he answered, "Oh, I shall have two," he said; "that is, the mare I have had these two years, and the horse my father gave me this morning."

"What! only those two? and the mare is nothing more than a pony."

"She is fifteen hands," said Frank, offended.

"Well, Frank, I certainly would not stand that," said the Honourable John. "What, go out before the county with

one untrained horse and a pony; and you the heir to Greshamsbury!"

"I'll have him so trained before November," said Frank, "that nothing in Barsetshire shall stop him. Peter says"—Peter was the Greshamsbury stud-groom—"that he tucks up his hind legs beautifully."

"But who the deuce would think of going to work with one horse; or two either, if you insist on calling the old pony a huntress? I'll put you up to a trick, my lad: if you stand that you'll stand anything; and if you don't mean to go in leading-strings all your life, now is the time to show it. There's young Baker—Harry Baker, you know—he came of age last year, and he has as pretty a string of nags as anyone would wish to set eyes on; four hunters and a hack. Now, if old Baker has four thousand a-year it's every shilling he has got."

This was true, and Frank Gresham, who in the morning had been made so happy by his father's present of a horse, began to feel that hardly enough had been done for him. It was true that Mr. Baker had only four thousand a-year; but it was also true that he had no other child than Harry Baker; that he had no great establishment to keep up; that he owed a shilling to no one; and, also, that he was a great fool in encouraging a mere boy to ape all the caprices of a man of wealth. Nevertheless, for a moment Frank Gresham did feel that, considering his position, he was being treated rather unworthily.

"Take the matter in your own hands, Frank," said the Honourable John, seeing the impression that he had made. "Of course the governor knows very well that you won't put up with such a stable as that. Lord bless you! I have heard that when he married my aunt, and that was when he was about your age, he had the best stud in the whole county; and then he was in parliament before he was three-and-twenty."

"His father you know died when he was very young," said Frank.

"Yes; I know he had a stroke of luck that doesn't fall to every one; but—"

Young Frank's face grew dark now instead of red. When his cousin submitted to him the necessity of having more than two horses for his own use he could listen to him; but when the same monitor talked of the chance of a father's death as a stroke of luck, Frank was too much disgusted to be able to pretend to pass it over with indifference. What! was he thus to think of his father, whose face was always lighted up with pleasure when his boy came near him, and so rarely bright at any other time? Frank had watched his father closely enough to be aware of this; he knew how his father delighted in him; he had had cause to guess that his father had many troubles and that he strove hard to banish the memory of them when his son was with him. He loved his father truly, purely and thoroughly, liked to be with him, and would be proud to be his confidant. Could he then listen quietly while his cousin spoke of the chance of his father's death as a stroke of luck?

"I shouldn't think it a stroke of luck, John. I should think it the greatest misfortune in the world."

It is so difficult for a young man to enunciate sententiously a principle of morality, or even an expression of ordinary good feeling, without giving himself something of a ridiculous air, without assuming something of mock grandeur.

"Oh, of course, my dear fellow," said the Honourable John, laughing; "that's a matter of course. We all understand that without saying it. Porlock, of course, would feel exactly the same about the governor; but if the governor were to walk, I think Porlock would console himself with the thirty thousand a year."

"I don't know what Porlock would do. He's always quarrelling with my uncle, I know. I only spoke for myself; I never quarrelled with my father and I hope I never shall."

"All right, my lad of wax, all right. I dare say you won't be tried; but, if you are, you'll find before six months are

over that it's a very nice thing to be master of Greshamsbury."

"I'm sure I shouldn't find anything of the kind."

"Very well, so be it. You wouldn't do as young Hatherly did, at Hatherly Court, in Gloucestershire, when his father kicked the bucket. You know Hatherly, don't you?"

"No; I never saw him."

"He's Sir Frederick now, and has, or had, one of the finest fortunes in England, for a commoner. The most of it is gone now. Well, when he heard of his governor's death, he was in Paris, but he went off to Hatherly as fast as special train and post-horses would carry him, and got there just in time for the funeral. As he came back to Hatherly Court from the church, they were putting up the hatchment over the door, and Master Fred saw that the undertakers put at the bottom 'Resurgam.' You know what that means?"

"Oh yes," said Frank.

"'I'll come back again,'" said the Honourable John, construing the Latin for the benefit of his cousin. "'No,' said Fred Hatherly, looking up at the hatchment; 'I'm blessed if you do, old gentleman. That would be too much of a joke; I'll take care of that.' So he got up at night, and he got some fellows with him, and they climbed up and painted out 'Resurgam,' and they painted into its place, 'Requiescat in pace;' which means, you know, 'you'd a great deal better stay where you are.' Now I call that good. Fred Hatherly did that as sure as—as sure as—as sure as anything."

Frank could not help laughing at the story, especially at his cousin's mode of translating the undertaker's mottos; and then they sauntered back from the stables into the house to dress for dinner.

Dr. Thorne had come to the house somewhat before dinner-time, at Mr. Gresham's request, and was now sitting with the squire in his own book-room—so called—while Mary was talking to some of the girls upstairs.

"I must have ten or twelve thousand pounds; ten at the

very least," said the squire, who was sitting in his usual arm-chair, close to his littered table, with his head supported on his hand, looking very unlike the father of an heir to a noble property, who had that day come of age.

It was the first of July, and of course there was no fire in the grate; but, nevertheless, the doctor was standing with his back to the fire-place, with his coat-tails over his arms, as though he were engaged, now in summer as he so often was in winter, in talking and roasting his hinder person at the same time.

"Twelve thousand pounds! It's a very large sum of money."

"I said ten," said the squire.

"Ten thousand pounds is a large sum of money. There is no doubt he'll let you have it. Scatcherd will let you have it; but I know he'll expect to have the title-deeds."

"What! for ten thousand pounds?" said the squire. "There is not a registered debt against the property but his own and Armstrong's."

"But his own is very large already."

"Armstrong's is nothing; about four-and-twenty thousand pounds."

"Yes; but he comes first, Mr. Gresham."

"Well; what of that? To hear you talk, one would think that there was nothing left of Greshamsbury. What's four-and-twenty thousand pounds? Does Scatcherd know what the rent roll is?"

"Oh, yes; he knows it well enough: I wish he did not."

"Well, then, why does he make such a bother about a few thousand pounds? The title-deeds, indeed!"

"What he means is, that he must have ample security to cover what he has already advanced before he goes on. I wish to goodness you had no further need to borrow. I did think that things were settled last year."

"Oh, if there's any difficulty, Umbleby will get it for me."

"Yes; and what will you have to pay for it?"

"I'd sooner pay double than be talked to in this way," said the squire, angrily; and, as he spoke, he got up hurriedly from his chair, thrust his hands into his trousers' pockets, walked quickly to the window, and immediately walking back again, threw himself once more into his chair. "There are some things a man cannot bear, doctor," said he, beating the devil's tattoo on the floor with one of his feet, "though God knows I ought to be patient now, for I am made to bear a good many such things. You had better tell Scatcherd that I am obliged to him for his offer, but that I will not trouble him."

The doctor during this little outburst had stood quite silent with his back to the fire-place and his coat tails hanging over his arms; but though his voice said nothing, his face said much. He was very unhappy; he was greatly grieved to find that the squire was so soon again in want of money, and greatly grieved also to find that this want had made him so bitter and unjust. Mr. Gresham had attacked him; but as he was determined not to quarrel with Mr. Gresham, he refrained from answering.

The squire also remained silent for a few minutes; but he was not endowed with the gift of silence, and was soon, as it were, compelled to speak again. "Poor Frank," said he. "I could yet be easy about everything if it were not for the injury I have done him. Poor Frank!"

The doctor advanced a few paces from off the rug, and taking his hand out of his pocket, he laid it gently on the squire's shoulder. "Frank will do very well yet," said he. "It is not absolutely necessary that a man should have fourteen thousand pounds a-year to be happy."

"My father left me the property entire, and I should leave it entire to my son; but you don't understand this."

The doctor did understand the feeling fully. The fact, on the other hand, was that, long as he had known him, the squire did not understand the doctor. "I would you could, Mr. Gresham," said the doctor, "so that your mind might be happier; but that cannot be, and, therefore, I say again,

that Frank will do very well yet, although he will not inherit fourteen thousand pounds a-year; and I would have you say the same thing to yourself."

"Ah, you don't understand it," persisted the squire. "You don't know how a man feels when he—. Ah, well! it's no use my troubling you with what cannot be mended. I wonder whether Umbleby is about the place any where?" The doctor was again standing with his back against the chimney-piece, and with his hands in his pockets. "You did not see Umbleby as you came in?" again asked the squire.

"No, I did not; and if you will take my advice you will not see him now; at any rate with reference to this money."

"I tell you I must get it from some-one; you say Scatcherd won't let me have it."

"No, Mr. Gresham; I did not say that."

"Well, you said what was as bad. Augusta is to be married in September, and the money must be had. I have agreed to give Moffat six thousand pounds, and he is to have the money down in hard cash."

"Six thousand pounds," said the doctor. "Well, I suppose that is not more than your daughter should have. But then, five times six are thirty; thirty thousand pounds will be a large sum to make up."

The father thought to himself that his younger girls were but children, and that the trouble of arranging their marriage portions might well be postponed awhile. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

"That Moffat is a griping, hungry fellow," said the squire. "I suppose Augusta likes him; and, as regards money, it is a good match."

"If Miss Gresham loves him that is everything. I am not in love with him myself, but then, I am not a young lady."

"The De Courcys are very fond of him. Lady de Courcy says that he is a perfect gentleman, and thought very much of in London."

"Oh! if Lady de Courcy says that, of course it's all right," said the doctor, with a quiet sarcasm, that was altogether thrown away on the squire.

The squire did not like any of the De Courcys, especially, he did not like Lady de Courcy; but still he was accessible to a certain amount of gratification in the near connexion which he had with the earl and countess; and when he wanted to support his family greatness, would sometimes weakly fall back upon the grandeur of Courcy Castle. It was only when talking to his wife that he invariably snubbed the pretensions of his noble relatives.

The two men after this remained silent for a while; and then the doctor, renewing the subject for which he had been summoned into the book-room, remarked, that as Scatcherd was now in the country—he did not say, was now at Boxall Hill, as he did not wish to wound the squire's ears—perhaps he had better go and see him, and ascertain in what way this affair of the money might be arranged. There was no doubt, he said, that Scatcherd would supply the sum required at a lower rate of interest than that at which it could be procured through Umbleby's means.

"Very well," said the squire, "I'll leave it in your hands then. I think ten thousand pounds will do. And now I'll dress for dinner." And then the doctor left him.

Perhaps the reader will suppose after this that the doctor had some pecuniary interest of his own in arranging the squire's loans; or, at any rate, he will think that the squire must have so thought. Not in the least; neither had he any such interest, nor did the squire think that he had any. What Dr. Thorne did in this matter he did for love; what Dr. Thorne did in this matter the squire well knew was done for love. But the squire of Greshamsbury was a great man at Greshamsbury; and it behoved him to maintain the greatness of his squirehood when discussing his affairs with the village doctor. So much he had at any rate learnt from his contact with the De Courcys.

And the doctor,—proud, arrogant, contradictory, headstrong as he was,—why did he bear to be thus snubbed? Because he knew that the squire of Greshamsbury, when struggling with debt and poverty, required an indulgence for his weakness. Had Mr. Gresham been in easy circumstances, the doctor would by no means have stood so placidly with his hands in his pockets, and have had Mr. Umbleby thus thrown in his teeth. The doctor loved the squire, loved him as his own oldest friend; but he loved him ten times better as being in adversity than he could ever have done had things gone well at Greshamsbury in his time.

While this was going on down stairs, Mary was sitting up stairs with Beatrice Gresham in the school-room. The old school-room, so called, was now a sitting-room, devoted to the use of the grown-up young ladies of the family, whereas, one of the old nurseries was now the modern school-room. Mary well knew her way to this sanctum, and, without asking any questions, walked up to it when her uncle went to the squire. On entering the room she found that Augusta and the Lady Alexandrina were also there, and she hesitated for a moment at the door.

"Come in, Mary," said Beatrice, "you know my cousin Alexandrina." Mary came in, and having shaken hands with her two friends, was bowing to the lady, when the lady condescended, put out her noble hand, and touched Miss Thorne's fingers.

Beatrice was Mary's friend, and many heart-burnings and much mental solicitude did that young lady give to her mother by indulging in such a friendship. But Beatrice, with some faults, was true at heart, and she persisted in loving Mary Thorne in spite of the hints which her mother so frequently gave as to the impropriety of such an affection.

Nor had Augusta any objection to the society of Miss Thorne. Augusta was a strong-minded girl, with much of the De Courcy arrogance, but quite as well inclined to show it in opposition to her mother as in any other form.

To her alone in the house did Lady Arabella show much deference. She was now going to make a suitable match with a man of large fortune, who had been procured for her as an eligible *parti* by her aunt, the countess. She did not pretend, had never pretended, that she loved Mr. Moffat, but she knew, she said, that in the present state of her father's affairs such a match was expedient. Mr. Moffat was a young man of very large fortune, in parliament, inclined to business, and in every way recommendable. He was not a man of birth, to be sure; that was to be lamented—in confessing that Mr. Moffat was not a man of birth, Augusta did not go so far as to admit that he was the son of a tailor; such, however, was the rigid truth in this matter—he was not a man of birth, that was to be lamented; but in the present state of affairs at Greshamsbury, she understood well that it was her duty to postpone her own feelings in some respect. Mr. Moffat would bring fortune; she would bring blood and connexion. And as she so said, her bosom glowed with strong pride to think that she would be able to contribute so much more towards the proposed future partnership than her husband would do.

'Twas thus that Miss Gresham spoke of her match to her dear friends, her cousins, the De Courcys for instance, to Miss Oriel, her sister Beatrice, and even to Mary Thorne. She had no enthusiasm she admitted, but she thought she had good judgment. She thought she had shown good judgment in accepting Mr. Moffat's offer, though she did not pretend to any romance of affection. And, having so said, she went to work with considerable mental satisfaction, choosing furniture, carriages, and clothes, not extravagantly as her mother would have done, not in deference to the sterner dictates of the latest fashion as her aunt would have done, with none of the girlish glee in new purchases which Beatrice would have felt, but with sound judgment. She bought things that were rich, for her husband was to be rich, and she meant to avail herself of his wealth; she bought things that were fashionable, for she

meant to live in the fashionable world; but she bought what was good, and strong, and lasting, and worth its money.

Augusta Gresham had perceived early in life that she could not obtain success either as an heiress or as a beauty, nor could she shine as a wit; she, therefore, fell back on such qualities as she had, and determined to win the world as a strong-minded, useful woman. That which she had of her own was blood; having that, she would in all ways do what in her lay to enhance its value. Had she not possessed it, it would to her mind have been the vainest of pretences.

When Mary came in, the wedding preparations were being discussed. The number and names of the bridesmaids were being settled, the dresses were on the tapis, the invitations to be given were talked over. Sensible as Augusta was, she was not above such feminine cares; she was, indeed, rather anxious that the wedding should go off well. She was a little ashamed of her tailor's son, and therefore anxious that things should be as brilliant as possible.

The bridesmaids' names had just been written on a card as Mary entered the room. There were the Ladies Amelia, Rosina, Margaretta, and Alexandrina of course at the head of it; then came Beatrice and the twins, then Miss Oriel, who, though only a parson's sister, was a person of note, birth, and fortune. After this there had been here a great discussion whether or not there should be any more. If there were to be one more there must be two. Now Miss Moffat had expressed a direct wish, and Augusta, though she would much rather have done without her, hardly knew how to refuse. Alexandrina—we hope we may be allowed to drop "the lady," for the sake of brevity, for the present scene only—was dead against such an unreasonable request. "We none of us know her, you know; and it would not be comfortable." Beatrice strongly advocated the future sister-in-law's acceptance into the bevy; she had her own reasons. She was pained that Mary Thorne should not be among the number, and if Miss Moffat were accepted, perhaps Mary might be brought in as her colleague.

"If you have Miss Moffat," said Alexandrina, "you must have dear little pussy, too; and I really think that pussy is too young; it will be troublesome." Pussy was the youngest Miss Gresham, who was now only eight years old, and whose real name was Nina.

"Augusta," said Beatrice, speaking with some slight hesitation, some *soupçon* of doubt, before the high authority of her noble cousin, "if you do have Miss Moffat would you mind asking Mary Thorne to join her? I think Mary would like it, because, you see, Patience Oriel is to be one; and we have known Mary much longer than we have known Patience."

Then out and spake the Lady Alexandrina.

"Beatrice dear, if you think of what you are asking, I am sure you will see that it would not do; would not do at all. Miss Thorne is a very nice girl, I am sure; and, indeed, what little I have seen of her I highly approve. But, after all, who is she? Mamma, I know, thinks that Aunt Arabella has been wrong to let her be here so much, but——."

Beatrice became rather red in the face, and, in spite of the dignity of her cousin, was preparing to defend her friend.

"Mind, I am not saying a word against Miss Thorne."

"If I am married before her, she shall be one of my bridesmaids," said Beatrice.

"That will probably depend on circumstances," said the Lady Alexandrina: I find that I cannot bring my courteous pen to drop the title. "But Augusta is very peculiarly situated. Mr. Moffat is, you see, not of the very highest birth; and, therefore, she should take care that on her side every one about her is well born."

"Then you cannot have Miss Moffat," said Beatrice.

"No; I would not if I could help it," said the cousin.

"But the Thornes are as good a family as the Greshams," said Beatrice. She had not quite courage to say, as good as the De Courcys.

"I daresay they are; and if this was Miss Thorne of Ulla-

thorne, Augusta probably would not object to her. But can you tell me who Miss Mary Thorne is?"

"She is Dr. Thorne's niece."

"You mean that she is called so; but do you know who her father was, or who her mother was? I, for one, must own I do not. Mamma, I believe, does, but——"

At this moment the door opened gently, and Mary Thorne entered the room.

It may easily be conceived, that while Mary was making her salutations the three other young ladies were a little cast aback. The Lady Alexandrina, however, quickly recovered herself, and, by her inimitable presence of mind and facile grace of manner, soon put the matter on a proper footing.

"We were discussing Miss Gresham's marriage," said she; "I am sure I may mention to an acquaintance of so long standing as Miss Thorne, that the first of September has been now fixed for the wedding."

Miss Gresham! Acquaintance of so long standing! Why, Mary and Augusta Gresham had for years, we will hardly say now for how many, passed their mornings together in the same school-room; had quarrelled and squabbled, and caressed and kissed, and been all but as sisters to each other. Acquaintance, indeed! Beatrice felt that her ears were tingling, and even Augusta was a little ashamed. Mary, however, knew that the cold words had come from a De Courcy, and not from a Gresham, and did not, therefore, resent them.

"So it's settled, Augusta, is it?" said she; "the first of September. I wish you joy with all my heart," and coming round, she put her arm over Augusta's shoulder and kissed her. The Lady Alexandrina could not but think that the doctor's niece uttered her congratulations very much as though she were speaking to an equal, very much as though she had a father and mother of her own.

"You will have delicious weather," continued Mary. "September, and the beginning of October, is the nicest

time of the year. If I were going honeymooning it is just the time I would choose."

"I wish you were, Mary," said Beatrice.

"So do not I, dear, till I have found some decent sort of body to honeymoon along with me. I won't stir out of Greshambury till I have sent you off before me, at any rate. And where will you go, Augusta?"

"We have not settled that," said Augusta. "Mr. Moffat talks of Paris."

"Who ever heard of going to Paris in September?" said the Lady Alexandrina.

"Or who ever heard of the gentleman having anything to say on the matter?" said the doctor's niece. "Of course Mr. Moffat will go wherever you are pleased to take him."

The Lady Alexandrina was not pleased to find how completely the doctor's niece took upon herself to talk, and sit, and act at Greshamsbury as though she was on a par with the young ladies of the family. That Beatrice should have allowed this would not have surprised her; but it was to be expected that Augusta would have shown better judgment.

"These things require some tact in their management; some delicacy when high interests are at stake," said she. "I agree with Miss Thorne in thinking that, in ordinary circumstances, with ordinary people, perhaps, the lady should have her way. Rank, however, has its drawbacks, Miss Thorne, as well as its privileges."

"I should not object to the drawbacks," said the doctor's niece, "presuming them to be of some use; but I fear I might fail in getting on so well with the privileges."

The Lady Alexandrina looked at her as though not fully aware whether she intended to be pert. In truth, the Lady Alexandrina was rather in the dark on the subject. It was almost impossible,—it was incredible, that a fatherless, motherless, doctor's niece should be pert to an earl's daughter at Greshamsbury, seeing that that earl's daughter was the cousin of the Miss Greshams. And yet the Lady

Alexandrina hardly knew what other construction to put on the words she had just heard.

It was at any rate clear to her that it was not becoming that she should just then stay any longer in that room. Whether she intended to be pert or not, Miss Mary Thorne was, to say the least, very free. The De Courcy ladies knew what was due to them,—no ladies better; and, therefore, the Lady Alexandrina made up her mind at once to go to her own bed-room.

"Augusta," she said, rising slowly from her chair with much stately composure, "it is nearly time to dress; will you come with me? We have a great deal to settle, you know."

So she swam out of the room, and Augusta, telling Mary that she would see her again at dinner, swam—no, tried to swim—after her. Miss Gresham had had great advantages; but she had not been absolutely brought up at Courcy Castle, and could not as yet quite assume the Courcy style of swimming.

"There," said Mary, as the door closed behind the rustling muslins of the ladies. "There, I have made an enemy for ever, perhaps two; that's satisfactory."

"And why have you done it, Mary? When I am fighting your battles behind your back, why do you come and upset it all by making the whole family of the De Courcys dislike you? In such a matter as that, they'll all go together."

"I am sure they will," said Mary; "whether they would be equally unanimous in a case of love and charity, that, indeed, is another question."

"But why should you try to make my cousin angry,—you that ought to have so much sense? Don't you remember what you were saying yourself the other day, of the absurdity of combating pretences which the world sanctions?"

"I do, Trichy, I do; don't scold me now. It is so much easier to preach than to practise. I do so wish I was a clergyman."

"But you have done so much harm, Mary."

"Have I?" said Mary, kneeling down on the ground at her friend's feet. "If I humble myself very low, if I kneel through the whole evening in a corner, if I put my neck down and let all your cousins trample on it, and then your aunt, would not that make atonement? I would not object to wearing sackcloth, either; and I'd eat a little ashes—or, at any rate, I'd try."

"I know you're very clever, Mary; but still I think you're a fool. I do, indeed."

"I am a fool, Trichy, I do confess it; and am not a bit clever: but don't scold me, you see how humble I am;—not only humble but umble, which I look upon to be the comparative or, indeed, superlative degree. Or perhaps there are four degrees; humble, umble, stumble, tumble; and then, when one is absolutely in the dirt at their feet, perhaps these big people won't wish one to stoop any further."

"Oh, Mary!"

"And oh, Trichy! you don't mean to say I mayn't speak out before you. There, perhaps you'd like to put your foot on my neck." And then she put her head down to the foot-stool and kissed Beatrice's foot.

"I'd like, if I dared, to put my hand on your cheek and give you a good slap for being such a goose."

"Do; do, Trichy: you shall tread on me, or slap me, or kiss me; whichever you like."

"I can't tell you how vexed I am," said Beatrice; "I wanted to arrange something."

"Arrange something! What? arrange what? I love arranging. I fancy myself qualified to be an arranger-general in female matters. I mean pots and pans, and such like. Of course I don't allude to extraordinary people and extraordinary circumstances that require tact, and delicacy, and drawbacks, and that sort of thing."

"Very well, Mary."

"But it's not very well. It's very bad if you look like

that. Well, my pet, there, I won't. I won't allude to the noble blood of your noble relatives either in joke or in earnest. What is it you want to arrange, Trichy?"

"I want you to be one of Augusta's bridesmaids."

"Good heavens, Beatrice! Are you mad? What! Put me, even for a morning, into the same category of finery as the noble brood from Courcy Castle!"

"Patience is to be one."

"But that is no reason why Impatience should be another, and I should be very impatient under such honours. No, Trichy; joking apart, do not think of it. Even if Augusta wished it, I should refuse. I should be obliged to refuse. I, too, suffer from pride,—a pride quite as unpardonable as that of others: I could not stand with your four lady-cousins behind your sister at the altar. In such a galaxy they would be the stars, and I——"

"Why, Mary, all the world knows that you are prettier than any of them!"

"I am all the world's very humble servant. But, Trichy, I should not object if I were as ugly as the veiled prophet and they all as beautiful as Zuleika. The glory of that galaxy will be held to depend not on its beauty, but on its birth. You know how they would look at me; how they would scorn me; and there, in church, at the altar, with all that is solemn round us, I could not return their scorn as I might do elsewhere. In a room I'm not a bit afraid of them all." And Mary was again allowing herself to be absorbed by that feeling of indomitable pride, of antagonism to the pride of others, which she herself in her cooler moments was the first to blame.

"You often say, Mary, that that sort of arrogance should be despised and passed over without notice."

"So it should, Trichy. I tell you that as the clergyman tells you to hate riches. But though the clergyman tells you so, he is not the less anxious to get rich himself."

"I particularly wish you to be one of Augusta's bridesmaids."

"And I particularly wish to decline the honour; which honour has not been, and will not be, offered to me. No, Trichy. I will not be Augusta's bridesmaid, but—but—but——"

"But what, dearest?"

"But, Trichy, when some one else is married, when the new wing has been built to a house that you know of——"

"Now, Mary, hold your tongue, or you know you'll make me angry."

"I do so like to see you angry. And when that time comes, when that wedding does take place, then I will be a bridesmaid, Trichy. Yes! even though I am not invited. Yes! though all the De Courcys in Barsetshire should tread upon me and obliterate me. Though I should be as dust among the stars, though I should creep up in calico among their satins and lace, I will nevertheless be there; close, close to the bride; to hold something for her, to touch her dress, to feel that I am near her, to—to—to——" and she threw her arms round her companion, and kissed her over and over again. "No, Trichy; I won't be Augusta's bridesmaid. I'll bide my time for bridesmaiding."

What protestations Beatrice made against the probability of such an event as was foreshadowed in her friend's promise we will not now repeat. The afternoon was advancing, and the ladies also had to dress for dinner, to do honour to the young heir.

CHAPTER V

Frank Gresham's First Speech

WE have said, that over and above those assembled in the house, there came to the Greshamsbury dinner on Frank's birthday, the Jacksons of the Grange, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Jackson; the Batesons from Annesgrove, viz., Mr. and Mrs. Bateson, and Miss Bateson, their daughter,—an unmarried lady of about fifty; the Bakers of Mill Hill, father and son; and Mr. Caleb Oriel, the rector, with his beautiful sister, Patience. Dr. Thorne, and his niece Mary, we count among those already assembled at Greshamsbury.

There was nothing very magnificent in the number of the guests thus brought together to do honour to young Frank; but he, perhaps, was called on to take a more prominent part in the proceedings, to be made more of a hero than would have been the case had half the county been there. In that case the importance of the guests would have been so great that Frank would have got off with a half-muttered speech or two; but now he had to make a separate oration to every one, and very weary work he found it.

The Batesons, Bakers, and Jacksons were very civil;—no doubt the more so from an unconscious feeling on their part, that as the squire was known to be a little out at elbows as regards money, any deficiency on their part might be considered as owing to the present state of affairs at Greshamsbury. Fourteen thousand a year will receive honour: in that case there is no doubt, and the man absolutely possessing it is not apt to be suspicious as to the treatment he may receive; but the ghost of fourteen thousand a year is not always so self-assured. Mr. Baker, with his moderate income, was a very much richer man than the squire; and, therefore, he was peculiarly forward in congratulating Frank on the brilliancy of his prospects.

Poor Frank had hardly anticipated what there would be to do, and before dinner was announced he was very tired of it. He had no warmer feeling for any of his grand cousins than a very ordinary cousinly love; and he had resolved, forgetful of birth and blood, and all those gigantic considerations which, now that manhood had come upon him, he was bound always to bear in mind,—he had resolved to sneak out to dinner comfortably with Mary Thorne if possible; and if not with Mary, then with his other love, Patience Oriel.

Great, therefore, was his consternation at finding that, after being kept continually in the foreground for half an hour before dinner, he had to walk out to the dining-room with his aunt, the countess, and take his father's place for the day at the bottom of the table.

"It will now depend altogether upon yourself, Frank, whether you maintain or lose that high position in the county which has been held by the Greshams for so many years," said the countess, as she walked through the spacious hall, resolving to lose no time in teaching to her nephew that great lesson which it was so imperative that he should learn.

Frank took this as an ordinary lecture, meant to inculcate general good conduct, such as old bores of aunts are apt to inflict on youthful victims in the shape of nephews and nieces.

"Yes," said Frank; "I suppose so; and I mean to go along all square, aunt, and no mistake. When I get back to Cambridge, I'll read like bricks."

His aunt did not care two straws about his reading. It was not by reading that the Greshams of Greshamsbury had held their heads up in the county, but by having high blood and plenty of money. The blood had come naturally to this young man; but it behoved him to look for the money in a great measure himself. She, Lady de Courcy, could doubtless help him; she might probably be able to fit him with a wife who would bring her money to match

his birth. His reading was a matter in which she could in no way assist him: whether his taste might lead him to prefer books or pictures, or dogs and horses, or turnips in drills, or old Italian plates and dishes, was a matter which did not much signify;—with which it was not at all necessary that his noble aunt should trouble herself.

"Oh! you are to go to Cambridge again, are you? Well, if your father wishes it;—though very little is ever gained now by a university connexion."

"I am to take my degree in October, aunt; and I am determined, at any rate, that I won't be plucked."

"Plucked!"

"No; I won't be plucked. Baker was plucked last year, and all because he got into the wrong set at John's. He's an excellent fellow if you know him. He got among a set of men who did nothing but smoke and drink beer. Malthusians, we call them."

"Malthusians!"

"'Malt,' you know, aunt, and 'use;' meaning that they drink beer. So poor Harry Baker got plucked. I don't know that a fellow's any the worse; however, I won't get plucked."

By this time the party had taken their place round the long board, Mr. Gresham sitting at the top, in the place usually occupied by the Lady Arabella. She, on the present occasion, sat next to her son on the one side, as the countess did on the other. If, therefore, Frank now went astray, it would not be from want of proper leading.

"Aunt, will you have some beef?" said he, as soon as the soup and fish had been disposed of, anxious to perform the rites of hospitality now for the first time committed to his charge.

"Do not be in a hurry, Frank," said his mother; "the servants will——"

"Oh! ah! I forgot. There are cutlets and those sort of things. My hand is not in yet for this work, aunt. Well, as I was saying about Cambridge——"

"Is Frank to go back to Cambridge, Arabella?" said the countess to her sister-in-law, speaking across her nephew.

"So his father seems to say."

"Is it not waste of time?" asked the countess.

"You know I never interfere," said the Lady Arabella; "I never liked the idea of Cambridge myself, at all. All the De Courcys were Christchurch men; but the Greshams, it seems, were always at Cambridge."

"Would it not be better to send him abroad at once?"

"Much better, I should think," said the Lady Arabella; "but you know I never interfere: perhaps you would speak to Mr. Gresham."

The countess smiled grimly, and shook her head with a decidedly negative shake. Had she said out loud to the young man, "Your father is such an obstinate, pig-headed, ignorant fool, that it is no use speaking to him; it would be wasting fragrance on the desert air," she could not have spoken more plainly. The effect on Frank was this:—that he said to himself, speaking quite as plainly as Lady de Courcy had spoken by her shake of the face, "My mother and aunt are always down on the governor, always, but the more they are down on him the more I'll stick to him. I certainly will take my degree: I will read like bricks; and I'll begin to-morrow."

"Now will you take some beef, aunt?" This was said out loud.

The Countess de Courcy was very anxious to go on with her lesson without loss of time; but she could not, while surrounded by guests and servants, enunciate the great secret: "You must marry money, Frank; that is your one great duty; that is the matter to be borne steadfastly in your mind." She could not now, with sufficient weight and impress of emphasis, pour this wisdom into his ears; the more especially as he was standing up to his work of carving, and was deep to his elbows in horseradish, fat, and gravy. So the countess sat silent while the banquet proceeded.

"Beef, Harry?" shouted out the young heir to his friend Baker. "Oh! but I see it isn't your turn yet. I beg your pardon, Miss Bateson," and he sent to that lady a pound and a half of excellent meat, cut out with great energy in one slice, about half an inch thick.

And so the banquet went on.

Before dinner, Frank had found himself obliged to make numerous small speeches in answer to the numerous individual congratulations of his friends; but these were as nothing to the one great accumulated onus of an oration which he had long known that he should have to sustain after the cloth was taken away. Some one of course would propose his health, and then there would be a clatter of voices, ladies and gentlemen, men and girls; and when that was done he would find himself standing on his legs, with the room about him going round and round and round.

Having had a previous hint of this, he had sought advice from his cousin, the Honourable George, whom he regarded as a dab at speaking; at least, so he had heard the Honourable George say of himself.

"What the deuce is a fellow to say, George, when he stands up after the clatter is done?"

"Oh, it's the easiest thing in life," said the cousin. "Only remember this: you mustn't get astray; that is what they call presence of mind, you know. I'll tell you what I do, and I'm often called up, you know; at our agriculturals I always propose the farmers' daughters: well, what I do is this—I keep my eye steadfastly fixed on one of the bottles, and never move it."

"On one of the bottles!" said Frank; "wouldn't it be better if I made a mark of some old covey's head? I don't like looking at the table."

"The old covey'd move, and then you'd be done; besides, there isn't the least use in the world in looking up. I've heard people say, who go to those sort of dinners every day of their lives, that whenever anything witty is said, the fellow who says it is sure to be looking at the mahogany."

"Oh, you know I shan't say anything witty; I'll be quite the other way."

"But there's no reason why you shouldn't learn the manner. That's the way I succeeded. Fix your eye on one of the bottles, put your thumbs in your waistcoat pockets; stick out your elbows, bend your knees a little, and then go ahead."

"Oh, ah! go ahead; that's very well; but you can't go ahead if you haven't got any steam."

"A very little does it. There can be nothing so easy as your speech. When one has to say something now every year about the farmers' daughters, why one has to use one's brains a bit. Let's see; how will you begin? Of course you'll say that you are not accustomed to this sort of thing; that the honour conferred upon you is too much for your feelings; that the bright array of beauty and talent around you quite overpowers your tongue, and all that sort of thing. Then declare you're a Gresham to the backbone."

"Oh, they know that."

"Well, tell them again. Then of course you must say something about us; or you'll have the countess as black as old nick."

"About my aunt, George? What on earth can I say about her when she's there herself before me?"

"Before you! of course; that's just the reason. Oh, say any lie you can think of; you must say something about us. You know we've come down from London on purpose."

Frank, in spite of the benefit he was receiving from his cousin's erudition, could not help wishing in his heart that they had all remained in London;—but this he kept to himself. He thanked his cousin for his hints, and, though he did not feel that the trouble of his mind was completely cured, he began to hope that he might go through the ordeal without disgracing himself.

Nevertheless, he felt rather sick at heart when Mr. Baker got up to propose the toast as soon as the servants were gone. The servants, that is, were gone officially; but they

were there in a body, men and women, nurses, cooks, and lady's-maids, coachmen, grooms, and footmen, standing in the two doorways to hear what Master Frank would say. The old housekeeper headed the maids at one door, standing boldly inside the room; and the butler controlled the men at the other, marshalling them back with a drawn corkscrew.

Mr. Baker did not say much; but what he did say he said well. They had all seen Frank Gresham grow up from a child; and were now required to welcome as a man amongst them one who was so well qualified to carry on the honour of that loved and respected family. His young friend, Frank, was every inch a Gresham. Mr. Baker omitted to make mention of the infusion of De Courcy blood, and the countess, therefore, drew herself up on her chair and looked as though she were extremely bored. He then alluded tenderly to his own long friendship with the present squire, Francis Newbold Gresham the elder; and sat down, begging them to drink health, prosperity, long life, and an excellent wife to their dear young friend, Francis Newbold Gresham the younger.

There was a great jingling of glasses, of course;—made the merrier and the louder by the fact that the ladies were still there as well as the gentlemen. Ladies don't drink toasts frequently; and, therefore, the occasion coming rarely was the more enjoyed. "God bless you, Frank!" "Your good health, Frank!" "And especially a good wife, Frank!" "Two or three of them, Frank!" "Good health and prosperity to you, Mr. Gresham!" "More power to you, Frank, my boy!" "May God bless and preserve you, my dear boy!" and then a merry, sweet, eager voice, from the far end of the table, "Frank! Frank! do look at me; pray do, Frank; I am drinking your health in real wine; ain't I, papa?" Such were the addresses which greeted Mr. Francis Newbold Gresham the younger as he essayed to rise upon his feet for the first time since he had come to man's estate.

When the clatter was at an end, and he was fairly on his legs, he cast a glance before him on the table, to look for a decanter. He had not much liked his cousin's theory of sticking to the bottle; nevertheless, in the difficulty of the moment, it was well to have any system to go by. But, as misfortune would have it, though the table was covered with bottles, his eye could not catch one. Indeed, his eye at first could catch nothing, for the things swam before him, and the guests all seemed to dance in their chairs.

Up he got, however, and commenced his speech. As he could not follow his preceptor's advice as touching the bottle, he adopted his own crude plan of "making a mark of some old covey's head," and therefore looked dead at the doctor.

"Upon my word, I am very much obliged to you, gentlemen and ladies,—ladies and gentlemen I should say,—for drinking my health, and doing me so much honour, and all that sort of thing. Upon my word I am. Especially to Mr. Baker. I don't mean you, Harry, you're not Mr. Baker."

"As much as you're Mr. Gresham, Master Frank."

"But I am not Mr. Gresham; and I don't mean to be for many a long year if I can help it;—not at any rate till we have had another coming of age here."

"Bravo, Frank; and whose will that be?"

"That will be my son, and a very fine lad he will be; and I hope he'll make a better speech than his father. Mr. Baker said I was every inch a Gresham. Well, I hope I am." Here the countess began to look cold and angry. "I hope the day will never come when my father won't own me for one."

"There's no fear, no fear," said the doctor, who was almost put out of countenance by the orator's intense gaze. The countess looked colder and more angry, and muttered something to herself about a bear-garden.

"Gardez Gresham; eh? Harry! mind that when you're sticking in a gap and I'm coming after you. Well, I am sure

I am very much obliged to you for the honour you have all done me, especially the ladies, who don't do this sort of thing on ordinary occasions. I wish they did; don't you, doctor? And talking of ladies, my aunt and cousins have come all the way from London to hear me make this speech, which certainly is not worth the trouble; but, all the same, I am very much obliged to them." And he looked round and made a little bow at the countess. "And so I am to Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, and Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bateson, and Mr. Baker—I'm not at all obliged to you, Harry—and to Mr. Oriel and Miss Oriel, and to Mr. Umbleby, and to Dr. Thorne, and to Mary—I beg her pardon, I mean Miss Thorne." And then he sat down, amid the loud plaudits of the company, and a string of blessings which came from the servants behind him.

After this, the ladies rose and departed. As she went, Lady Arabella kissed her son's forehead, and then his sisters kissed him, and one or two of his lady-cousins: and then Miss Bateson shook him by the hand. "Oh, Miss Bateson," said he, "I thought the kissing was to go all round." So Miss Bateson laughed and went her way; and Patience Oriel nodded at him, but Mary Thorne, as she quietly left the room, almost hidden among the extensive draperies of the grander ladies, hardly allowed her eyes to meet his.

He got up to hold the door for them as they passed; and as they went, he managed to take Patience by the hand; he took her hand and pressed it for a moment, but dropped it quickly, in order that he might go through the same ceremony with Mary, but Mary was too quick for him.

"Frank," said Mr. Gresham, as soon as the door was closed, "bring your glass here, my boy;" and the father made room for his son close beside himself. "The ceremony is over now, so you may leave your place of dignity." Frank sat himself down where he was told, and Mr. Gresham put his hand on his son's shoulder and half caressed him, while the tears stood in his eyes. "I think the doctor

is right, Baker, I think he'll never make us ashamed of him."

"I am sure he never will," said Mr. Baker.

"I don't think he ever will," said Dr. Thorne.

The tones of the men's voices were very different. Mr. Baker did not care a straw about it; why should he? He had an heir of his own as well as the squire; one also who was the apple of *his* eye. But the doctor,—he did care; he had a niece, to be sure, whom he loved, perhaps as well as these men loved their sons; but there was room in his heart also for young Frank Gresham.

After this small *exposé* of feeling they sat silent for a moment or two. But silence was not dear to the heart of the Honourable John, and so he took up the running.

"That's a niceish nag you gave Frank this morning," said he to his uncle. "I was looking at him before dinner. He is a Monsoon, isn't he?"

"Well, I can't say I know how he was bred," said the squire. "He shows a good deal of breeding."

"He's a Monsoon, I'm sure," said the Honourable John. "They've all those ears, and that peculiar dip in the back. I suppose you gave a goodish figure for him?"

"Not so very much," said the squire.

"He's a trained hunter, I suppose?"

"If not, he soon will be," said the squire.

"Let Frank alone for that," said Harry Baker.

"He jumps beautifully, sir," said Frank. "I haven't tried him myself, but Peter made him go over the bar two or three times this morning."

The Honourable John was determined to give his cousin a helping hand, as he considered it. He thought that Frank was very ill used in being put off with so incomplete a stud, and thinking also that the son had not spirit enough to attack his father himself on the subject, the Honourable John determined to do it for him.

"He's the making of a very nice horse, I don't doubt. I wish you had a string like him, Frank."

Frank felt the blood rush to his face. He would not for worlds have his father think that he was discontented, or otherwise than pleased with the present he had received that morning. He was heartily ashamed of himself in that he had listened with a certain degree of complacency to his cousin's tempting; but he had no idea that the subject would be repeated—and then repeated, too, before his father, in a manner to vex him on such a day as this, before such people as were assembled there. He was very angry with his cousin, and for a moment forgot all his hereditary respect for a De Courcy.

"I tell you what, John," said he, "do you choose your day, some day early in the season, and come out on the best thing you have, and I'll bring, not the black horse, but my old mare; and then do you try and keep near me. If I don't leave you at the back of God-speed before long, I'll give you the mare and the horse too."

The Honourable John was not known in Barsetshire as one of the most forward of its riders. He was a man much addicted to hunting, as far as the get-up of the thing was concerned; he was great in boots and breeches; wondrously conversant with bits and bridles; he had quite a collection of saddles; and patronised every newest invention for carrying spare shoes, sandwiches, and flasks of sherry. He was prominent at the cover side; some people, including the master of the hounds, thought him perhaps a little too loudly prominent; he affected a familiarity with the hounds, and was on speaking acquaintance with every man's horse. But when the work was cut out, when the pace began to be sharp, when it behoved a man either to ride or visibly to decline to ride, then—so at least said they who had not the De Courcy interest quite closely at heart—then, in those heart-stirring moments, the Honourable John was too often found deficient.

There was, therefore, a considerable laugh at his expense when Frank, instigated to his innocent boast by a desire to save his father, challenged his cousin to a trial of

prowess. The Honourable John was not, perhaps, as much accustomed to the ready use of his tongue as was his honourable brother, seeing that it was not his annual business to depict the glories of the farmers' daughters; at any rate, on this occasion he seemed to be at some loss for words: he shut up, as the slang phrase goes, and made no further allusion to the necessity of supplying young Gresham with a proper string of hunters.

But the old squire had understood it all;—had understood the meaning of his nephew's attack; had thoroughly understood also the meaning of his son's defence, and the feeling which had actuated it. He also had thought of the stable full of horses which had belonged to himself when he came of age; and of the much more humble position which his son would have to fill than that which *his* father had prepared for him. He thought of this, and was sad enough, though he had sufficient spirit to hide from his friends around him the fact, that the Honourable John's arrow had not been discharged in vain.

"He shall have Champion," said the father to himself. "It is time for me to give it up."

Now Champion was one of two fine old hunters which the squire kept for his own use. And it may have been said of him now, at this period of which we are speaking, that the only really happy moments of his life were those which he spent in the field. So much as to its being time for him to give it up.

CHAPTER VI

Frank Gresham's Early Loves

IT was we have said the first of July, and such being the time of the year, the ladies, after sitting in the drawing-room for half an hour or so, began to think that they might as well go through the drawing-room windows on to the lawn. First one slipped out a little way, and then another; and then they got on to the lawn; and then they talked of their hats; till, by degrees, the younger ones of the party, and at last the elder also, found themselves dressed for walking.

The windows, both of the drawing-room and the dining-room, looked out on to the lawn; and it was only natural that the girls should walk from the former to the latter. It was only natural that they, being there, should tempt their swains to come to them by the sight of their broad-brimmed hats and evening dresses; and natural also, that the temptation should not be resisted. The squire, therefore, and the elder male guests soon found themselves alone round their wine.

"Upon my word, we were enchanted by your eloquence, Mr. Gresham, were we not?" said Miss Oriel, turning to one of the De Courcy girls who was with her.

Miss Oriel was a very pretty girl; a little older than Frank Gresham,—perhaps a year or so. She had dark hair, large round dark eyes, a nose a little too broad, a pretty mouth, a beautiful chin, and, as we have said before, a large fortune;—that is moderately large—let us say twenty thousand pounds, there or thereabouts. She and her brother had been living at Greshamsbury for the last two years, the living having been purchased for him—such were Mr. Gresham's necessities—during the lifetime of the last old incumbent. Miss Oriel was in every respect a nice neighbour; she was good-humoured, lady-like, lively, neither

too clever nor too stupid, belonging to a good family, sufficiently fond of this world's good things, as became a pretty young lady so endowed, and sufficiently fond, also, of the other world's good things, as became the mistress of a clergyman's house.

"Indeed, yes," said the Lady Margaretta. "Frank is very eloquent. When he described our rapid journey from London, he nearly moved me to tears. But well as he talks, I think he carves better."

"I wish you'd had it to do, Margaretta;—both the carving and talking."

"Thank you, Frank; you're very civil."

"But there's one comfort, Miss Oriel, it's over now, and done. A fellow can't be made to come of age twice."

"But you'll take your degree, Mr. Gresham; and then, of course, there'll be another speech; and then you'll get married, and then there will be two or three more."

"I'll speak at your wedding, Miss Oriel, long before I do at my own."

"I shall not have the slightest objection. It will be so kind of you to patronise my husband."

"But, by Jove, will he patronise me? I know you'll marry some awful big wig, or some terribly clever fellow, won't she, Margaretta?"

"Miss Oriel was saying so much in praise of you before you came out," said Margaretta, "that I began to think that her mind was intent on remaining at Greshamsbury all her life."

Frank blushed, and Patience laughed. There was but a year's difference in their age; Frank, however, was still a boy, though Patience was fully a woman.

"I am ambitious, Lady Margaretta," said she. "I own it; but I am moderate in my ambition. I do love Greshamsbury, and if Mr. Gresham had a younger brother, perhaps, you know——"

"Another just like myself, I suppose," said Frank.

"Oh, yes. I could not possibly wish for any change."

"Just as eloquent as you are, Frank," said the Lady Margaretta.

"And as good a carver," said Patience.

"Miss Bateson has lost her heart to him for ever, because of his carving," said the Lady Margaretta.

"But perfection never repeats itself," said Patience.

"Well, you see, I have not got any brothers," said Frank; "so all I can do is to sacrifice myself."

"Upon my word, Mr. Gresham, I am under more than ordinary obligations to you;—I am, indeed," and Miss Oriel stood still in the path, and made a very graceful curtsey. "Dear me, only think, Lady Margaretta, that I should be honoured with an offer from the heir the very moment he is legally entitled to make one!"

"And done with so much true gallantry, too," said the other; "expressing himself quite willing to postpone any views of his own for your advantage."

"Yes," said Patience; "that's what I value so much: had he loved me now, there would have been no merit on his part, but a sacrifice, you know."

"Yes, ladies are so fond of such sacrifices. Frank, upon my word I had no idea you were so very excellent at making speeches."

"Well," said Frank, "I shouldn't have said sacrifice,—that was a slip; what I meant was——"

"Oh, dear me," said Patience, "wait a minute; now we are going to have a regular declaration. Lady Margaretta, you haven't got a scent-bottle, have you? And if I should faint, where's the garden-chair?"

"Oh, but I'm not going to make a declaration at all," said Frank.

"Are you not? Oh! Now, Lady Margaretta, I appeal to you; did you not understand him to say something very particular?"

"Certainly, I thought nothing could be plainer," said the Lady Margaretta.

"And so, Mr. Gresham, I am to be told, that after all it

means nothing," said Patience, putting her handkerchief up to her eyes.

"It means that you are an excellent hand at quizzing a fellow like me."

"Quizzing! No; but you are an excellent hand at deceiving a poor girl like me. Well, remember I have got a witness; here is Lady Margaretta, who heard it all. What a pity it is that my brother is a clergyman. You calculated on that, I know; or you would never have served me so."

She said so just as her brother had joined them, or rather just as he had joined Lady Margaretta de Courcy;—for her ladyship and Mr. Oriel walked on in advance by themselves. Lady Margaretta had found it rather dull work, making a third in Miss Oriel's flirtation with her cousin; the more so as she was quite accustomed to take a principal part herself in all such transactions. She, therefore, not unwillingly walked on with Mr. Oriel. Mr. Oriel, it must be conceived, was not a common, every-day parson, but had points about him which made him quite fit to associate with an earl's daughter. And as it was known that he was not a marrying man, having very exalted ideas on that point connected with his profession, the Lady Margaretta, of course, had the less objection to trust herself alone with him.

But directly she was gone, Miss Oriel's tone of banter ceased. It was very well making a fool of a lad of twenty-one when others were by; but there might be danger in it when they were alone together.

"I don't know any position on earth more enviable than yours, Mr. Gresham," she said, quite soberly and earnestly; "how happy you ought to be."

"What, in being laughed at by you, Miss Oriel, for pretending to be a man, when you choose to make out that I am only a boy? I can bear being laughed at pretty well generally, but I can't say that your laughing at me makes me feel so happy as you say I ought to be."

Frank was evidently of an opinion totally different from

that of Miss Oriel. Miss Oriel, when she found herself *tête-à-tête* with him, thought it was time to give over flirting. Frank, however, imagined that it was just the moment for him to begin. So he spoke and looked very languishing, and put on him quite the airs of an Orlando.

"Oh, Mr. Gresham, such good friends as you and I may laugh at each other, may we not?"

"You may do what you like, Miss Oriel: beautiful women I believe always may; but you remember what the spider said to the fly, 'that which is sport to you, may be death to me.'" Any one looking at Frank's face as he said this, might well have imagined that he was breaking his very heart for love of Miss Oriel. Oh, Master Frank! Master Frank! if you act thus in the green leaf, what will you do in the dry?

While Frank Gresham was thus misbehaving himself, and going on as though to him belonged the privilege of falling in love with pretty faces, as does to ploughboys and other ordinary people, his great interests were not forgotten by those guardian saints who were so anxious to shower down on his head all manner of temporal blessings.

Another conversation had taken place in the Greshamsbury gardens, in which nothing light had been allowed to present itself; nothing frivolous had been spoken. The countess, the Lady Arabella, and Miss Gresham had been talking over Greshamsbury affairs, and they had latterly been assisted by the Lady Amelia, than whom no De Courcy ever born was more wise, more solemn, more prudent, or more proud. The ponderosity of her qualifications for nobility was sometimes too much even for her mother, and her devotion to the peerage was such, that she would certainly have declined a seat in heaven if offered to her without the promise that it should be in the upper house.

The subject first discussed had been Augusta's prospects. Mr. Moffat had been invited to Courcy Castle, and Augusta had been taken thither to meet him, with the express intention, on the part of the countess, that they should

be man and wife. The countess had been careful to make it intelligible to her sister-in-law and niece, that though Mr. Moffat would do excellently well for a daughter of Greshamsbury, he could not be allowed to raise his eyes to a female scion of Courcy Castle.

"Not that we personally dislike him," said the Lady Amelia; "but rank has its drawbacks, Augusta." As the Lady Amelia was now somewhat nearer forty than thirty, and was still allowed to walk

"In maiden meditation, fancy free,"

it may be presumed that in her case rank had been found to have serious drawbacks.

To this Augusta said nothing in objection. Whether desirable by a De Courcy or not, the match was to be hers, and there was no doubt whatever as to the wealth of the man whose name she was to take: the offer had been made, not to her, but to her aunt; the acceptance had been expressed, not by her, but by her aunt. Had she thought of recapitulating in her memory all that had ever passed between Mr. Moffat and herself, she would have found that it did not amount to more than the most ordinary conversation between chance partners in a ball-room. Nevertheless, she was to be Mrs. Moffat. All that Mr. Gresham knew of him was, that when he met the young man for the first and only time in his life, he found him extremely hard to deal with in the matter of money. He had insisted on having ten thousand pounds with his wife, and at last refused to go on with the match unless he got six thousand pounds. This latter sum the poor squire had undertaken to pay him.

Mr. Moffat had been for a year or two M.P. for Barchester; having been assisted in his views on that ancient city by all the De Courcy interest. He was a Whig, of course. Not only had Barchester, departing from the light of other days, returned a Whig member of parliament, but it was declared, that at the next election, now near at hand,

a Radical would be sent up, a man pledged to the ballot, to economies of all sorts, one who would carry out Barchester politics in all their abrupt, obnoxious, pestilent virulence. This was one Scatcherd, a great railway contractor, a man who was a native of Barchester, who had bought property in the neighbourhood, and who had achieved a sort of popularity there and elsewhere by the violence of his democratic opposition to the aristocracy. According to this man's political tenets, the Conservatives should be laughed at as fools, but the Whigs should be hated as knaves.

Mr. Moffat was now coming down to Courcy Castle to look after his electioneering interests, and Miss Gresham was to return with her aunt to meet him. The countess was very anxious that Frank should also accompany them. Her great doctrine, that he must marry money, had been laid down with authority and received without doubt. She now pushed it further, and said that no time should be lost; that he should not only marry money, but do so very early in life; there was always danger in delay. The Greshams,—of course she alluded only to the males of the family, were foolishly soft-hearted; no one could say what might happen. There was that Miss Thorne always at Greshamsbury.

This was more than the Lady Arabella could stand. She protested that there was at least no ground for supposing that Frank would absolutely disgrace his family.

Still the countess persisted: "Perhaps not," she said; "but when young people of perfectly different ranks were allowed to associate together, there was no saying what danger might arise. They all knew that old Mr. Bateson—the present Mr. Bateson's father—had gone off with the governess; and young Mr. Everbeery, near Taunton, had only the other day married a cook-maid."

"But Mr. Everbeery was always drunk, aunt," said Augusta, feeling called upon to say something for her brother.

"Never mind, my dear; these things do happen, and they are very dreadful."

"Horrible!" said the Lady Amelia; "diluting the best blood of the country, and paving the way for revolutions." This was very grand; but, nevertheless, Augusta could not but feel that she perhaps might be about to dilute the blood of her coming children in marrying the tailor's son. She consoled herself by trusting that, at any rate, she paved the way for no revolutions.

"When a thing is so necessary," said the countess, "it cannot be done too soon. Now, Arabella, I don't say that anything will come of it; but it may: Miss Dunstable is coming down to us next week. Now, we all know that when old Dunstable died last year, he left over two hundred thousand to his daughter."

"It is a great deal of money, certainly," said Lady Arabella.

"It would pay off everything, and a great deal more," said the countess.

"It was ointment, was it not, aunt?" said Augusta.

"I believe so, my dear; something called the Ointment of Lebanon, or something of that sort: but there's no doubt about the money."

"But how old is she, Rosina?" asked the anxious mother.

"About thirty, I suppose; but I don't think that much signifies."

"Thirty," said Lady Arabella, rather dolefully. "And what is she like? I think that Frank already begins to like girls that are young and pretty."

"But, surely, aunt," said the Lady Amelia, "now that he has come to man's discretion, he will not refuse to consider all that he owes to his family. A Mr. Gresham of Greshamsbury has a position to support." The De Courcy scion spoke these last words in the sort of tone that a parish clergyman would use, in warning some young farmer's son that he should not put himself on an equal footing with the ploughboys.

It was at last decided that the countess should herself convey to Frank a special invitation to Courcy Castle, and that when she got him there, she should do all that lay in her power to prevent his return to Cambridge, and to further the Dunstable marriage.

"We did think of Miss Dunstable for Porlock, once," she said, naïvely, "but when we found that it wasn't much over two hundred thousand, why that idea fell to the ground." The terms on which the De Courcy blood might be allowed to dilute itself were, it must be presumed, very high indeed.

Augusta was sent off to find her brother, and to send him to the countess in the small drawing-room. Here the countess was to have her tea, apart from the outer common world, and here, without interruption, she was to teach her great lesson to her nephew.

Augusta did find her brother, and found him in the worst of bad society,—so at least the stern De Courcys would have thought. Old Mr. Bateson and the governess, Mr. Everbeery and his cook's diluted blood, and ways paved for revolutions, all presented themselves to Augusta's mind when she found her brother walking with no other company than Mary Thorne, and walking with her too in much too close proximity.

How he had contrived to be off with the old love and so soon on with the new, or rather, to be off with the new love and again on with the old, we will not stop to inquire. Had Lady Arabella, in truth, known all her son's doings in this way, could she have guessed how very nigh he had approached to the iniquity of old Mr. Bateson, and to the folly of young Mr. Everbeery, she would in truth have been in a hurry to send him off to Courcy Castle and Miss Dunstable. Some days before the commencement of our story, young Frank had sworn in sober earnest—in what he intended for his most sober earnest, his most earnest sobriety—that he loved Mary Thorne with a love for which words could find no sufficient expression,—with a

love that could never die, never grow dim, never become less, which no opposition on the part of others could extinguish, which no opposition on her part should repel; that he might, could, would, and should have her for his wife, and that if she told him that she didn't love him, he would——!

"Oh, oh! Mary; do you love me? Don't you love me? Won't you love me? Say you will. Oh, Mary, dearest Mary, will you? won't you? do you? don't you? Come now, you have a right to give a fellow an answer."

With such eloquence had the heir of Greshamsbury, when not yet twenty-one years of age, attempted to possess himself of the affections of the doctor's niece. And yet three days afterwards he was quite ready to flirt with Miss Oriel.

If such things are done in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?

And what had Mary said when these fervent protestations of an undying love had been thrown at her feet? Mary, it must be remembered, was very nearly of the same age as Frank; but, as I and others have so often said before, "Women grow on the sunny side of the wall." Though Frank was only a boy, it behoved Mary to be something more than a girl. Frank might be allowed, without laying himself open to much just reproach, to throw all of what he believed to be his heart into a protestation of what he believed to be love; but Mary was in duty bound to be more thoughtful, more reticent, more aware of the facts of their position, more careful of her own feelings, and more careful also of his.

And yet she could not put him down as another young lady might put down another young gentleman. It is very seldom that a young man, unless he be tipsy, assumes an unwelcome familiarity in his early acquaintance with any girl; but when acquaintance has been long and intimate, familiarity must follow as a matter of course. Frank and Mary had been so much together in his holidays, had so

con antly consorted together as boys and girls, that, as regarded her, he had not that innate fear of a woman which represses a young man's tongue; and she was so used to his good humour, his fun, and high jovial spirits, and was, withal so fond of them and him, that it was very difficult for her to mark with accurate feeling, and stop with reserved brow, the first shade of change from a boy's liking to a man's love.

And Beatrice, too, had done harm in this matter. With a spirit painfully unequal to that of her grand relatives, she had quizzed Mary and Frank about their early flirtations. This she had done; but had instinctively avoided doing so before her mother and sister, and had thus made a secret of it, as it were, between herself, Mary, and her brother; had given currency, as it were, to the idea that there might be something serious between the two. Not that Beatrice had ever wished to promote a marriage between them, or had even thought of such a thing. She was girlish, thoughtless, imprudent, inartistic, and very unlike a De Courcy. Very unlike a De Courcy she was in all that; but, nevertheless, she had the De Courcy veneration for blood, and more than that, she had the Gresham feeling joined to that of the De Courcys'. The Lady Amelia would not for worlds have had the De Courcy blood defiled; but gold she thought could not defile. Now Beatrice was ashamed of her sister's marriage, and had often declared, within her own heart, that nothing could have made her marry a Mr. Moffat.

She had said so also to Mary, and Mary had told her that she was right. Mary also was proud of blood, was proud of her uncle's blood, and the two girls had talked together, in all the warmth of girlish confidence, of the great glo ies of family traditions and family honours. Beatrice had talked in utter ignorance as to her friend's birth, and Mary, poor Mary,—she had talked, being as ignorant; but not without a strong suspicion that, at some future time, a day of sorrow would tell her some fearful truth.

On one point Mary's mind was strongly made up. No wealth, no mere worldly advantage could make anyone her superior. If she were born a gentlewoman, then was she fit to match with any gentleman. Let the most wealthy man in Europe pour all his wealth at her feet, she could, if so inclined, give him back at any rate more than that. That offered at her feet she knew would never tempt her to yield up the fortress of her heart, the guardianship of her soul, the possession of her mind;—not that alone, nor that even, as any possible slightest fraction of a make-weight.

If she were born a gentlewoman! And then came to her mind those curious questions; what makes a gentleman? what makes a gentlewoman? What is the inner reality, the spiritualized quintessence of that privilege in the world which men call rank, which forces the thousands and hundreds of thousands to bow down before the few elect? What gives, or can give it, or should give it?

And she answered the question. Absolute, intrinsic, acknowledged, individual merit must give it to its possessor, let him be whom, and what, and whence he might. So far the spirit of democracy was strong within her. Beyond this it could be had but by inheritance, received as it were second hand, or twenty-second hand. And so far the spirit of aristocracy was strong within her. All this she had, as may be imagined, learnt in early years from her uncle; and all this she was at great pains to teach Beatrice Gresham, the chosen of her heart.

When Frank declared that Mary had a right to give him an answer, he meant that he had a right to expect one. Mary acknowledged this right, and gave it him.

"Mr. Gresham," she said.

"Oh, Mary; Mr. Gresham!"

"Yes, Mr. Gresham. It must be Mr. Gresham after that. And, moreover, it must be Miss Thorne as well."

"I'll be shot if it shall, Mary."

"Well, I can't say that I shall be shot if it be not so; but if

it be not so, if you do not agree that it shall be so, I shall be turned out of Greshamsbury."

"What! you mean my mother?" said Frank.

"Indeed, I mean no such thing," said Mary, with a flash from her eye that made Frank almost start. "I mean no such thing. I mean you, not your mother. I am not in the least afraid of Lady Arabella; but I am afraid of you."

"Afraid of me, Mary!"

"Miss Thorne; pray, pray remember. It must be Miss Thorne. Do not turn me out of Greshamsbury. Do not separate me from Beatrice. It is you that will drive me out; no one else. I could stand my ground against your mother —I feel I could; but I cannot stand against you if you treat me otherwise than—than——"

"Otherwise than what? I want to treat you as the girl I have chosen from all the world as my wife."

"I am sorry you should so soon have found it necessary to make a choice. But, Mr. Gresham, we must not joke about this at present. I am sure you would not willingly injure me; but if you speak to me, or of me, again in that way, you will injure me,—injure me so much that I shall be forced to leave Greshamsbury in my own defence. I know you are too generous to drive me to that."

And so the interview had ended. Frank, of course, went up stairs to see if his new pocket-pistols were all ready, properly cleaned, loaded, and capped, should he find, after a few days' experience, that prolonged existence was unendurable.

However, he had managed to live through the subsequent period; doubtless with the view of preventing any disappointment to his father's guests.

CHAPTER VII

The Doctor's Garden

MARY had contrived to quiet her lover with considerable propriety of demeanour. Then came on her the somewhat harder task of quieting herself. Young ladies, on the whole, are perhaps quite as susceptible of the softer feelings as young gentlemen are. Now Frank Gresham was handsome, amiable, by no means a fool in intellect, excellent in heart; and he was, moreover, a gentleman, being the son of Mr. Gresham of Greshamsbury. Mary had been, as it were, brought up to love him. Had ought but good happened to him, she would have cried as for a brother. It must not therefore be supposed that when Frank Gresham told her that he loved her, she had heard it altogether unconcerned.

He had not, perhaps, made his declaration with that propriety of language in which such scenes are generally described as being carried on. Ladies may perhaps think that Mary should have been deterred, by the very boyishness of his manner, from thinking at all seriously on the subject. His "will you, won't you—do you, don't you?" does not sound like the poetic raptures of a highly-inspired lover. But, nevertheless, there had been warmth, and a reality in it, not in itself repulsive; and Mary's anger—anger? no, not anger—her objections to the declaration were probably not based on the absurdity of her lover's language.

We are inclined to think that these matters are not always discussed by mortal lovers in the poetically-passionate phraseology which is generally thought to be appropriate for this description. A man cannot well describe that which he has never seen or heard; but the absolute words and acts of one such scene did once come to the author's knowledge. The couple were by no means plebeian, or below the proper standard of high bearing and high breed-

ing; they were a handsome pair, living among educated people, sufficiently given to mental pursuits, and in every way what a pair of polite lovers ought to be. The all-important conversation passed in this wise. The site of the passionate scene was the sea-shore, on which they were walking, in autumn.

Gentleman. "Well, Miss, the long and the short of it is this: here I am; you can take me or leave me."

Lady—scratching a gutter on the sand with her parasol, so as to allow a little salt water to run out of one hole into another. "Of course, I know that's all nonsense."

Gentleman. "Nonsense! By Jove, it isn't nonsense at all: come, Jane; here I am: come, at any rate you can say something."

Lady. " Yes, I suppose I can say something."

Gentleman. "Well, which is it to be; take me or leave me?"

Lady—very slowly, and with a voice perhaps hardly articulate, carrying on, at the same time, her engineering works on a wider scale. "Well, I don't exactly want to leave you."

And so the matter was settled: settled with much propriety and satisfaction; and both the lady and gentleman would have thought, had they ever thought about the matter at all, that this, the sweetest moment of their lives, had been graced by all the poetry by which such moments ought to be hallowed.

When Mary had, as she thought, properly subdued young Frank, the offer of whose love she, at any rate, knew was, at such a period of his life, an utter absurdity, then she found it necessary to subdue herself. What happiness on earth could be greater than the possession of such a lover, had the true possession been justly and honestly within her reach? What man could be more loveable than such a man as would grow from such a boy? And then, did she not love him, love him already, without waiting for any change? Did she not feel that there was that about him, about him

and about herself, too, which might so well fit them for each other? It would be so sweet to be the sister of Beatrice, the daughter of the squire, to belong to Greshamsbury as a part and parcel of itself.

But though she could not restrain these thoughts, it never for a moment occurred to her to take Frank's offer in earnest. Though she was a grown woman, he was still a boy. He would have to see the world before he settled in it, and would change his mind about woman half a score of times before he married. Then, too, though she did not like the Lady Arabella, she felt that she owed something, if not to her kindness, at least to her forbearance; and she knew, felt inwardly certain, that she would be doing wrong, that the world would say she was doing wrong, that her uncle would think her wrong, if she endeavoured to take advantage of what had passed.

She had not for an instant doubted; not for a moment had she contemplated it as possible that she should ever become Mrs. Gresham because Frank had offered to make her so; but, nevertheless, she could not help thinking of what had occurred—of thinking of it, most probably much more than Frank did himself.

A day or two afterwards, on the evening before Frank's birthday, she was alone with her uncle, walking in the garden behind their house, and she then essayed to question him, with the object of learning if she were fitted by her birth to be the wife of such a one as Frank Gresham. They were in the habit of walking there together when he happened to be at home of a summer's evening. This was not often the case, for his hours of labour extended much beyond those usual to the upper working world, the hours, namely, between breakfast and dinner; but those minutes that they did thus pass together, the doctor regarded as perhaps the pleasantest of his life.

"Uncle," said she, after a while, "what do you think of this marriage of Miss Gresham's?"

"Well, Minnie"—such was his name of endearment for

her—"I can't say I have thought much about it, and I don't suppose anybody else has either."

"She must think about it of course; and so must he, I suppose."

"I'm not so sure of that. Some folks would never get married if they had to trouble themselves with thinking about it."

"I suppose that's why you never got married, uncle?"

"Either that, or thinking of it too much. One is as bad as the other."

Mary had not contrived to get at all near her point as yet; so she had to draw off, and after a while begin again.

"Well, I have been thinking about it, at any rate, uncle."

"That's very good of you; that will save me the trouble; and perhaps save Miss Gresham too. If you have thought it over thoroughly, that will do for all."

"I believe Mr. Moffat is a man of no family."

"He'll mend in that point, no doubt, when he has got a wife."

"Uncle, you're a goose; and what is worse, a very provoking goose."

"Niece, you're a gander; and what is worse, a very silly gander. What is Mr. Moffat's family to you and me? Mr. Moffat has that which ranks above family honours. He is a very rich man."

"Yes," said Mary, "I know he is rich; and a rich man I suppose can buy anything, except a woman that is worth having."

"A rich man can buy anything," said the doctor; "not that I meant to say that Mr. Moffat has bought Miss Gresham. I have no doubt that they will suit each other very well," he added with an air of decisive authority, as though he had finished the subject.

But his niece was determined not to let him pass so. "Now, uncle," said she, "you know you are pretending to a great deal of worldly wisdom, which, after all, is not wisdom at all in your eyes."

"Am I?"

"You know you are; and as for the impropriety of discussing Miss Gresham's marriage—"

"I did not say it was improper."

"Oh, yes, you did; of course such things must be discussed. How is one to have an opinion if one does not get it by looking at the things which happen around us?"

"Now I am going to be blown up," said Dr. Thorne.

"Dear uncle, do be serious with me."

"Well, then, seriously, I hope Miss Gresham will be very happy as Mrs. Moffat."

"Of course you do; so do I. I hope it as much as I can hope what I don't at all see ground for expecting."

"People constantly hope without any such ground."

"Well, then, I'll hope in this case. But, uncle—"

"Well, my dear?"

"I want your opinion, truly and really. If you were a girl—"

"I am perfectly unable to give any opinion founded on so strange an hypothesis."

"Well; but if you were a marrying man."

"The hypothesis is quite as much out of my way."

"But, uncle, I am a girl, and perhaps I may marry; or at any rate think of marrying some day."

"The latter alternative is certainly possible enough."

"Therefore, in seeing a friend take such a step, I cannot but speculate on the matter as though I were myself in her place. If I were Miss Gresham, should I be right?"

"But, Minnie, you are not Miss Gresham."

"No, I am Mary Thorne; it is a very different thing, I know. I suppose *I* might marry any one without degrading myself."

It was almost ill-natured of her to say this; but she had not meant to say it in the sense which the sounds seemed to bear. She had failed in being able to bring her uncle to the point she wished by the road she had planned, and in seeking another road, she had abruptly fallen into unpleasant places.

"I should be very sorry that my niece should think so," said he; "and am sorry too, that she should say so. But, Mary, to tell the truth, I hardly know at what you are driving. You are, I think, not so clear minded—certainly, not so clear worded—as is usual with you."

"I will tell you, uncle;" and, instead of looking up into his face, she turned her eyes down on the green lawn beneath their feet.

"Well, Minnie, what is it?" and he took both her hands in his.

"I think that Miss Gresham should not marry Mr. Moffat. I think so because her family is high and noble, and because his is low and ignoble. When one has an opinion on such matters, one cannot but apply it to things and people around one; and having applied my opinion to her, the next step naturally is to apply it to myself. Were I Miss Gresham, I would not marry Mr. Moffat though he rolled in gold. I know where to rank Miss Gresham. What I want to know is, where I ought to rank myself."

They had been standing when she commenced her last speech; but as she finished it, the doctor moved on again, and she moved with him. He walked on slowly without answering her; and she, out of her full mind, pursued aloud the tenor of her thoughts.

"If a woman feels that she would not lower herself by marrying in a rank beneath herself, she ought also to feel that she would not lower a man that she might love, by allowing him to marry into a rank beneath his own—that is, to marry her."

"That does not follow," said the doctor, quickly. "A man raises a woman to his own standard, but a woman must take that of the man she marries."

Again they were silent, and again they walked on, Mary holding her uncle's arm with both her hands. She was determined however to come to the point, and after considering for a while how best she might do it, she ceased to beat any longer about the bush, and asked him a plain question.

"The Thornes are as good a family as the Greshams, are they not?"

"In absolute genealogy they are, my dear. That is, when I choose to be an old fool and talk of such matters in a sense different from that in which they are spoken of by the world at large. I may say that the Thornes are as good, or perhaps better, than the Greshams; but I should be sorry to say so seriously to any one. The Greshams now stand much higher in the county than the Thornes do."

"But they are of the same class?"

"Yes, yes; Wilfred Thorne of Ullathorne, and our friend the squire here, are of the same class."

"But, uncle, I and Augusta Gresham; are we of the same class?"

"Well, Minnie, you would hardly have me boast that I am of the same class with the squire. I, a poor country doctor."

"You are not answering me fairly, dear uncle; dearest uncle, do you not know that you are not answering me fairly? You know what I mean. Have I a right to call the Thornes of Ullathorne my cousins?"

"Mary, Mary, Mary!" said he, after a minute's pause, still allowing his arm to hang loose, that she might hold it with both her hands. "Mary, Mary, Mary! I would that you had spared me this!"

"I could not have spared it to you for ever, uncle."

"I would that you could have done so; I would that you could."

"It is over now, uncle: it is told now; I will grieve you no more. Dear, dear, dearest! I should love you more than ever now, I would, I would; I would if that were possible. What should I be but for you? What must I have been but for you?" And she threw herself on his breast, and clinging with her arms round his neck, kissed his forehead, cheeks, and lips.

There was nothing more then said on the subject between them. Mary asked no further question, nor did the

doctor volunteer further information. She would have been most anxious to ask about her mother's history had she dared to do so; but she did not dare to ask; she could not bear to be told that her mother had been, perhaps was, a worthless woman. That she was truly a daughter of a brother of the doctor, that she did know. Little as she had heard of her relatives in her early youth, few as had been the words which had fallen from her uncle in her hearing as to her parentage, she did know this, that she was the daughter of Henry Thorne, a brother of the doctor, and a son of the old prebendary. Trifling little things that had occurred, accidents which could not be prevented, had told her this; but not a word had ever passed any one's lips as to her mother. The doctor, when speaking of his youth, had spoken of her father; but no one had spoken of her mother. She had long known that she was a child of a Thorne; now she knew also that she was no cousin of the Thornes of Ullathorne; no cousin, at least, in the world's ordinary language, no niece indeed of her uncle, unless by his special permission that she should be so.

When the interview was over, she went up alone to the drawing-room, and there she sat thinking. She had not been there long before her uncle came up to her. He did not sit down, or even take off the hat which he still wore; but coming close to her, and still standing, he spoke thus:—

"Mary, after what has passed I should be very unjust and very cruel not to tell you one thing more than you have now learned. Your mother was unfortunate in much, not in everything; but the world, which is very often stern in such matters, never judged her to have disgraced herself. I tell you this, my child, in order that you may respect her memory;" and, so saying, he again left her without giving her time to speak a word.

What he then told her he had told her in mercy. He felt what must be her feelings when she reflected that she had to blush for her mother; that not only could she not speak of her mother, but that she might hardly think of her with

innocence; and to mitigate such sorrow as this, and also to do justice to the woman whom his brother had so wronged, he had forced himself to reveal so much as is stated above.

And then he walked slowly by himself, backwards and forwards through the garden, thinking of what he had done with reference to this girl, and doubting whether he had done wisely and well. He had resolved, when first the little infant was given over to his charge, that nothing should be known of her or by her as to her mother. He was willing to devote himself to this orphan child of his brother, this last chance seedling of his father's house; but he was not willing so to do this as to bring himself in any manner into familiar contact with the Scatcherds. He had boasted to himself that he, at any rate, was a gentleman; and that she, if she were to live in his house, sit at his table, and share his hearth, must be a lady. He would tell no lie about her; he would not to any one make her out to be aught other or aught better than she was; people would talk about her of course, only let them not talk to him; he conceived of himself—and the conception was not without due ground—that should any do so, he had that within him which would silence them. He would never claim for this little creature—thus brought into the world without a legitimate position in which to stand—he would never claim for her any station that would not properly be her own. He would make for her a station as best he could; as he might sink or swim, so should she.

So he had resolved; but things had arranged themselves, as they often do, rather than been arranged by him. During ten or twelve years no one had heard of Mary Thorne; the memory of Henry Thorne and his tragic death had passed away; the knowledge that an infant had been born whose birth was connected with that tragedy, a knowledge never widely spread, had faded down into utter ignorance. At the end of these twelve years, Dr. Thorne had announced, that a young niece, a child of a brother long since dead, was

coming to live with him. As he had contemplated, no one spoke to him; but some people did no doubt talk among themselves. Whether or not the exact truth was surmised by any, it matters not to say; with absolute exactness, probably not; with great approach to it, probably yes. By one person, at any rate, no guess whatever was made; no thought relative to Dr. Thorne's niece ever troubled him; no idea that Mary Scatcherd had left a child in England ever occurred to him; and that person was Roger Scatcherd, Mary's brother.

To one friend, and one only, did the doctor tell the whole truth, and that was to the squire. "I have told you," said the doctor, "partly that you may know that the child has no right to mix with your children if you think much of such things. Do you, however, see to this. I would rather that no one else should be told."

No one else had been told; and the squire had "seen to it," by accustoming himself to look at Mary Thorne running about the house with his own children as though she were one of the same brood. Indeed, the squire had always been fond of Mary, had personally noticed her, and, in the affair of Mam'selle Larron, had declared that he would have her placed at once on the bench of magistrates; much to the disgust of the Lady Arabella.

And so things had gone on and on, and had not been thought of with much downright thinking till now, when she was one-and-twenty years of age, his niece came to him, asking as to her position, and inquiring in what rank of life she was to look for a husband.

And so the doctor walked backwards and forwards through his garden, slowly, thinking now with some earnestness what if, after all, he had been wrong about his niece? What, if by endeavouring to place her in the position of a lady, he had falsely so placed her, and robbed her of all legitimate position? What if there was no rank of life to which she could now properly attach herself?

And then, how had it answered, that plan of his of

keeping her all to himself? He, Dr. Thorne, was still a poor man; the gift of saving money had not been his; he had ever had a comfortable house for her to live in, and, in spite of Doctors Fillgrave, Century, Rerechild, and others, had made from his profession an income sufficient for their joint wants; but he had not done as others do: he had no three or four thousand pounds in the three per cents., on which Mary might live in some comfort when he should die. Late in life he had insured his life for eight hundred pounds; and to that, and that only, had he to trust for Mary's future maintenance. How had it answered, then, this plan of letting her be unknown to, and undreamed of by, those who were as near to her on her mother's side as he was on the father's? On that side, though there had been utter poverty, there was now absolute wealth.

But when he took her to himself, had he not rescued her from the very depths of the lowest misery; from the degradation of the workhouse; from the scorn of honest-born charity-children; from the lowest of this world's low conditions? Was she not now the apple of his eye, his one great sovereign comfort, his pride, his happiness, his glory? Was he to make her over, to make any portion of her over to others, if, by doing so, she might be able to share the wealth, as well as the coarse manners and uncouth society of her at present unknown connexions? He, who had never worshipped wealth on his own behalf; he, who had scorned the idol of gold, and had ever been teaching her to scorn it; was he now to show that his philosophy had all been false as soon as the temptation to do so was put in his way?

But yet, what man would marry this bastard child, without a sixpence, and bring not only poverty, but ill blood also on his own children? It might be very well for him, Dr. Thorne; for him whose career was made, whose name, at any rate, was his own; for him who had a fixed standing-ground in the world; it might be well for him to indulge in large views of a philosophy antagonistic to the world's

practice; but had he a right to do it for his niece? What man would marry a girl so placed? For those among whom she might have legitimately found a level, education had now utterly unfitted her. And then, he well knew that she would never put out her hand in token of love to any one without telling all she knew and all she surmised as to her own birth.

And that question of this evening; had it not been instigated by some appeal to her heart? Was there not already within her breast some cause for disquietude which had made her so pertinacious? Why else had she told him then, then for the first time, that she did not know where to rank herself? If such appeal had been made to her, it must have come from young Frank Gresham. What, in such case, would it behove him to do? Should he pack up his all, his lancet-cases, pestle and mortar, and seek anew fresh ground in a new world, leaving behind a huge triumph to those learned enemies of his, Fillgrave, Century, and Rerechild? Better that than remain at Greshamsbury at the cost of his child's heart and pride.

And so he walked slowly backwards and forwards through his garden, meditating these things painfully enough.

CHAPTER VIII

Matrimonial Prospects

IT will of course be remembered, that Mary's interview with the other girls at Greshamsbury took place some two or three days subsequently to Frank's generous offer of his hand and heart. Mary had quite made up her mind that the whole thing was to be regarded as a folly, and that it was not to be spoken of to any one; but yet her heart was sore enough. She was full of pride, and yet she knew she must bow her neck to the pride of others. Being, as she was herself, nameless, she could not but feel a stern, unflinching antagonism, the antagonism of a democrat, to the pretensions of others who were blessed with that of which she had been deprived. She had this feeling; and yet, of all things that she coveted, she most coveted that, for glorying in which, she was determined to heap scorn on others. She said to herself, proudly, that God's handiwork was the inner man, the inner woman, the naked creature animated by a living soul; that all other adjuncts were but man's clothing for the creature; all others, whether stitched by tailors or contrived by kings. Was it not within her capacity to do as nobly, to love as truly, to worship her God in heaven with as perfect a faith, and her god on earth with as leal a troth, as though blood had descended to her purely through scores of purely-born progenitors? So to herself she spoke; and yet, as she said it, she knew that were she a man, such a man as the heir of Greshamsbury should be, nothing should tempt her to sully her children's blood by mating herself with any one that was base born. She felt that were she an Augusta Gresham, no Mr. Moffat, let his wealth be what it might, should win her hand unless he too could tell of family honours and a line of ancestors.

And so, with a mind at war with itself, she came forth

armed to do battle against the world's prejudices; those prejudices she herself still loved so well.

And was she to give up her old affections, her feminine loves, because she found that she was cousin to nobody? Was she no longer to pour out her heart to Beatrice Gresham, with all the girlish volubility of an equal? Was she to be severed from Patience Oriel, and banished—or rather was she to banish herself—from the free place she had maintained in the various youthful female conclaves held within that parish of Greshamsbury?

Hitherto, what Mary Thorne would say, what Miss Thorne suggested in such or such a matter, was quite as frequently asked as any opinion from Augusta Gresham—quite as frequently, unless when it chanced that any of the De Courcy girls were at the house. Was this to be given up? These feelings had grown up among them since they were children, and had not hitherto been questioned among them. Now they were questioned by Mary Thorne. Was she in fact to find that her position had been a false one, and must be changed?

Such were her feelings when she protested that she would not be Augusta Gresham's bridesmaid, and offered to put her neck beneath Beatrice's foot; when she drove the Lady Margaretta out of the room, and gave her own opinion as to the proper grammatical construction of the word humble; such also had been her feelings when she kept her hand so rigidly to herself while Frank held the dining-room door open for her to pass through.

"Patience Oriel," said she to herself, "can talk to him of her father and mother: let Patience take his hand; let her talk to him;" and then, not long afterwards, she saw that Patience did talk to him; and seeing it, she walked along silent, among some of the old people, and with much effort did prevent a tear from falling down her cheek.

But why was the tear in her eye? Had she not proudly told Frank that his love-making was nothing but a boy's silly rhapsody? Had she not said so while she had yet reason

to hope that her blood was as good as his own? Had she not seen at a glance that his love tirade was worthy of ridicule, and of no other notice? And yet there was a tear now in her eye because this boy, whom she had scolded from her, whose hand, offered in pure friendship, she had just refused, because he, so rebuffed by her, had carried his fun and gallantry to one who would be less cross to him!

She could hear as she was walking, that while Lady Margaretta was with them, their voices were loud and merry; and her sharp ear could also hear, when Lady Margaretta left them, that Frank's voice became low and tender. So she walked on, saying nothing, looking straight before her, and by degrees separating herself from all the others.

The Greshamsbury grounds were on one side somewhat too closely hemmed in by the village. On this side was a path running the length of one of the streets of the village; and far down the path, near to the extremity of the gardens, and near also to a wicket-gate which led out into the village, and which could be opened from the inside, was a seat, under a big yew-tree, from which, through a breach in the houses of the village, might be seen the parish church, standing in the park on the other side. Hither Mary walked alone, and here she seated herself, determined to get rid of her tears and their traces before she again showed herself to the world.

"I shall never be happy here again," she said to herself; "never. I am no longer one of them, and I cannot live among them unless I am so." And then an idea came across her mind that she hated Patience Oriel; and then, instantly another idea followed it—quick as such thoughts are quick—that she did not hate Patience Oriel at all; that she liked her, nay, loved her; that Patience Oriel was a sweet girl; and that she hoped the time would come when she might see her the lady of Greshamsbury. And then the tear, which had been no whit controlled, which indeed had now made itself master of her, came to a head, and bursting

through the floodgates of the eye, came rolling down, and in its fall wetted her hand as it lay on her lap. "What a fool! what an idiot! what an empty-headed cowardly fool I am!" said she, springing up from the bench on her feet.

As she did so she heard voices close to her, at the little gate. They were those of her uncle and Frank Gresham.

"God bless you, Frank," said the doctor, as he passed out of the grounds. "You will excuse a lecture, won't you, from so old a friend? though you are a man now, and discreet, of course, by act of parliament."

"Indeed, I will, doctor," said Frank. "I will excuse a longer lecture than that from you."

"At any rate it won't be to-night," said the doctor, as he disappeared. "And if you see Mary, tell her that I am obliged to go; and that I will send Janet down to fetch her."

Now Janet was the doctor's ancient maid-servant.

Mary could not move on without being perceived; she therefore stood still till she heard the click of the door, and then began walking rapidly back to the house by the path which had brought her thither. The moment, however, that she did so, she found that she was followed; and in a very few minutes Frank was alongside of her.

"Oh, Mary!" said he, calling to her, but not loudly, before he quite overtook her, "how odd that I should come across you just when I have a message for you; and why are you all alone?"

Mary's first impulse was to reiterate her command to him to call her no more by her Christian name; but her second impulse told her that such an injunction at the present moment would not be prudent on her part. The traces of her tears were still there; and she well knew that a very little, the slightest show of tenderness on his part, the slightest effort on her own to appear indifferent would bring down more than one other such intruder. It would, moreover, be better for her to drop all outward sign that she remembered what had taken place. So long as he and she were then at Greshamsbury together, he should call

her Mary if he pleased. He would soon be gone, and while he remained she should keep out of his way.

"Your uncle has been obliged to go away to see an old woman at Silverbridge."

"At Silverbridge! why, he won't be back all night. Why could not the old woman send for Dr. Century?"

"I suppose she thought two old women could not get on well together."

Mary could not help smiling. She did not like her uncle going off so late on such a journey; but it was always felt as a triumph when he was invited into the strongholds of his enemies.

"And Janet is to come over for you. However, I told him it was quite unnecessary to disturb another old woman, for that I should of course see you home."

"Oh, no, Mr. Gresham; indeed you'll not do that."

"Indeed, and indeed, I shall."

"What! on this great day, when every lady is looking for you and talking of you. I suppose you want to set the countess against me for ever. Think, too, how angry Lady Arabella will be if you are absent on such an errand as this."

"To hear you talk, Mary, one would think that you were going to Silverbridge yourself."

"Perhaps I am."

"If I did not go with you some of the other fellows would. John, or George—"

"Good gracious, Frank! Fancy either of the Mr. de Courcys walking home with me!"

She had forgotten herself, and the strict propriety on which she had resolved, in the impossibility of foregoing her little joke against the De Courcy grandeur; she had forgotten herself, and called him Frank in her old, former, eager, free tone of voice; and then, remembering she had done so, she drew herself up, bit her lips, and determined to be doubly on her guard for the future.

"Well, it shall be either one of them or I," said Frank: "perhaps you would prefer my cousin George to me?"

"I should prefer Janet to either, seeing that with her I should not suffer the extreme nuisance of knowing that I was a bore."

"A bore! Mary, to me?"

"Yes, Mr. Gresham, a bore to you. Having to walk home through the mud with village young ladies is boring. All gentlemen feel it to be so."

"There is no mud; if there were you would not be allowed to walk at all."

"Oh! village young ladies never care for such things, though fashionable gentlemen do."

"I would carry you home, Mary, if it would do you a service," said Frank, with considerable pathos in his voice.

"Oh, dear me! pray do not, Mr. Gresham. I should not like it at all," said she; "a wheelbarrow would be preferable to that."

"Of course. Anything would be preferable to my arm, I know."

"Certainly; anything in the way of a conveyance. If I were to act baby, and you were to act nurse, it really would not be comfortable for either of us."

Frank Gresham felt disconcerted, though he hardly knew why. He was striving to say something tender to his lady-love; but every word that he spoke she turned into joke. Mary did not answer him coldly or unkindly; but, nevertheless, he was displeased. One does not like to have one's little offerings of sentimental service turned into burlesque when one is in love in earnest. Mary's jokes had appeared so easy too; they seemed to come from a heart so little troubled. This also was cause of vexation to Frank. If he could but have known all, he would perhaps have been better pleased.

He determined not to be absolutely laughed out of his tenderness. When, three days ago, he had been repulsed, he had gone away owning to himself that he had been beaten; owning so much, but owning it with great sorrow

and much shame. Since that he had come of age; since that he had made speeches, and speeches had been made to him; since that he had gained courage by flirting with Patience Oriel. No faint heart ever won a fair lady, as he was well aware; he resolved, therefore, that his heart should not be faint, and that he would see whether the fair lady might not be won by becoming audacity.

"Mary," said he, stopping in the path—for they were now near the spot where it broke out upon the lawn, and they could already hear the voices of the guests—"Mary, you are unkind to me."

"I am not aware of it, Mr. Gresham; but if I am, do not you retaliate. I am weaker than you, and in your power; do not you, therefore, be unkind to me."

"You refused my hand just now," continued he. "Of all the people now here at Greshamsbury, you are the only one that has not wished me joy; the only one—"

"I do wish you joy; I will wish you joy: there is my hand," and she frankly put out her ungloved hand. "You are quite man enough to understand me: there is my hand; I trust you to use it only as it is meant to be used."

He took it in his and pressed it cordially, as he might have done that of any other friend in such a case; and then —did not drop it as he should have done. He was not a St. Anthony, and it was most imprudent in Miss Thorne to subject him to such a temptation.

"Mary," said he; "dear Mary! dearest Mary! if you did but know how I love you!"

As he said this, holding Miss Thorne's hand, he stood on the pathway with his back towards the lawn and house, and, therefore, did not at first see his sister Augusta, who had just at that moment come upon them. Mary blushed up to her straw hat, and, with a quick jerk, recovered her hand. Augusta saw the motion, and Mary saw that Augusta had seen it.

From my tedious way of telling it, the reader will be led to imagine that the hand-squeezing had been protracted to

a duration quite incompatible with any objection to such an arrangement on the part of the lady; but the fault is all mine, in no part hers. Were I possessed of a quick spasmodic style of narrative, I should have been able to include it all—Frank's misbehaviour, Mary's immediate anger, Augusta's arrival, and keen Argus-eyed inspection, and then Mary's subsequent misery—in five words and half a dozen dashes and inverted commas. The thing should have been so told; for, to do Mary justice, she did not leave her hand in Frank's a moment longer than she could help herself.

Frank, feeling the hand withdrawn, and hearing, when it was too late, the step on the gravel, turned sharply round. "Oh, it's you, is it, Augusta? Well, what do you want?"

Augusta was not naturally very ill-natured, seeing that in her veins the high De Courcy blood was somewhat tempered by an admixture of the Gresham attributes; nor was she predisposed to make her brother her enemy by publishing to the world any of his little tender peccadillos; but she could not but bethink herself of what her aunt had been saying as to the danger of any such encounters as that she had just now beheld; she could not but start at seeing her brother thus, on the very brink of the precipice of which the countess had specially forewarned her mother. She, Augusta, was, as she well knew, doing her duty by her family in marrying a tailor's son for whom she did not care a chip, seeing the tailor's son was possessed of untold wealth. Now when one member of a household is making a struggle for a family, it is painful to see the benefit of that struggle negatived by the folly of another member. The future Mrs. Moffat did feel aggrieved by the fatuity of the young heir, and, consequently, took upon herself to look as much like her aunt De Courcy as she could do.

"Well, what is it?" said Frank, looking rather disgusted. "What makes you stick your chin up and look in that way?" Frank had hitherto been rather a despot among his sisters, and forgot that the eldest of them was now

passing altogether from under his sway to that of the tailor's son.

"Frank," said Augusta, in a tone of voice which did honour to the great lessons she had lately received, "aunt De Courcy wants to see you immediately in the small drawing-room;" and, as she said so, she resolved to say a few words of advice to Miss Thorne as soon as her brother should have left them.

"In the small drawing-room, does she? Well, Mary, we may as well go together, for I suppose it is tea-time now."

"You had better go at once, Frank," said Augusta; "the countess will be angry if you keep her waiting. She has been expecting you these twenty minutes. Mary Thorne and I can return together."

There was something in the tone in which the words, "Mary Thorne," were uttered, which made Mary at once draw herself up. "I hope," said she, "that Mary Thorne will never be any hindrance to either of you."

Frank's ear had also perceived that there was something in the tone of his sister's voice not boding comfort to Mary; he perceived that the De Courcy blood in Augusta's veins was already rebelling against the doctor's niece on his part, though it had condescended to submit itself to the tailor's son on her own part.

"Well, I am going," said he; "but look here, Augusta, if you say one word of Mary—"

Oh, Frank! Frank! you boy, you very boy! you goose, you silly goose! Is that the way you make love, desiring one girl not to tell of another, as though you were three children, tearing your frocks and trousers in getting through the same hedge together? Oh, Frank! Frank! you, the full-blown heir of Greshamsbury? You, a man already endowed with a man's discretion? You, the forward rider, that did but now threaten young Harry Baker and the Honourable John to eclipse them by prowess in the field? You, of age? Why, thou canst not as yet have left thy mother's apron-string!

"If you say one word of Mary—"

So far had he got in his injunction to his sister, but further than that, in such a case, was he never destined to proceed. Mary's indignation flashed upon him, striking him dumb long before the sound of her voice reached his ears; and yet she spoke as quick as the words would come to her call, and somewhat loudly too.

"Say one word of Mary, Mr. Gresham! And why should she not say as many words of Mary as she may please? I must tell you all now, Augusta; and I must also beg you not to be silent for my sake. As far as I am concerned, tell it to whom you please. This is the second time your brother—"

"Mary, Mary," said Frank, deprecating her loquacity.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Gresham; you have made it necessary that I should tell your sister all. He has now twice thought it well to amuse himself by saying to me words which it was illnatured in him to speak, and—"

"Illnatured Mary!"

"Ill natured in him to speak," continued Mary, "and to which it would be absurd for me to listen. He probably does the same to others," she added, being unable in heart to forget that sharpest of her wounds, that flirtation of his with Patience Oriel; "but to me it is almost cruel. Another girl might laugh at him, or listen to him, as she would choose; but I can do neither. I shall now keep away from Greshamsbury, at any rate till he has left it; and Augusta, I can only beg you to understand, that, as far as I am concerned, there is nothing which may not be told to all the world."

And, so saying, she walked on a little in advance of them, as proud as a queen. Had Lady de Courcy herself met her at that moment, she would almost have felt herself forced to shrink out of the pathway. "Not say a word of me!" she repeated to herself, but still out loud. "No word need be left unsaid on my account; none, none."

Augusta followed her, dumbfounded at her indigna-

tion; and Frank also followed, but not in silence. When his first surprise at Mary's great anger was over, he felt himself called upon to say some word that might tend to exonerate his lady-love; and some word also of protestation as to his own purpose.

"There is nothing to be told, nothing, at least, of Mary," he said, speaking to his sister; "but of me, you may tell this, if you choose to disoblige your brother—that I love Mary Thorne with all my heart; and that I will never love any one else."

By this time they had reached the lawn, and Mary was able to turn away from the path which led up to the house. As she left them she said in a voice, now low enough, "I cannot prevent him from talking nonsense, Augusta; but you will bear me witness, that I do not willingly hear it." And, so saying, she started off almost in a run towards a distant part of the gardens, in which she saw Beatrice.

Frank, as he walked up to the house with his sister, endeavoured to induce her to give him a promise that she would tell no tales as to what she had heard and seen.

"Of course, Frank, it must be all nonsense," she had said; "and you shouldn't amuse yourself in such a way."

"Well, but Guss, come, we have always been friends; don't let us quarrel just when you are going to be married." And Augusta would make no promise.

Frank, when he reached the house, found the countess waiting for him, sitting in the little drawing-room by herself, somewhat impatiently. As he entered he became aware that there was some peculiar gravity attached to the coming interview. Three persons, his mother, one of his younger sisters, and the Lady Amelia, each stopped him to let him know that the countess was waiting; and he perceived that a sort of guard was kept upon the door to save her ladyship from any undesirable intrusion.

The countess frowned at the moment of his entrance, but soon smoothed her brow, and invited him to take a chair ready prepared for him opposite to the elbow of the

sofa on which she was leaning. She had a small table before her, on which was her tea-cup, so that she was able to preach at him nearly as well as though she had been ensconced in a pulpit.

"My dear Frank," said she, in a voice thoroughly suitable to the importance of the communication, "you have to-day come of age."

Frank remarked that he understood that such was the case, and added that, "that was the reason of all the fuss."

"Yes; you have to-day come of age. Perhaps I should have been glad to see such an occasion noticed at Greshamsbury with some more suitable signs of rejoicing."

"Oh, aunt! I think we did it all very well."

"Greshamsbury, Frank, is, or at any rate ought to be, the seat of the first commoner in Barsetshire."

"Well; so it is. I am quite sure there isn't a better fellow than my father anywhere in the county."

The countess sighed. Her opinion of the poor squire was very different from Frank's. "It is no use now," said she, "looking back to that which cannot be cured. The first commoner in Barsetshire should hold a position. I will not of course say equal to that of a peer."

"Oh dear, no; of course not," said Frank; and a bystander might have thought that there was a touch of satire in his tone.

"No, not equal to that of a peer; but still of very paramount importance. Of course my first ambition is bound up in Porlock."

"Of course," said Frank, thinking how very weak was the staff on which his aunt's ambition rested; for Lord Porlock's youthful career had not been such as to give unmitigated satisfaction to his parents.

"Is bound up in Porlock:" and then the countess plumed herself; but the mother sighed. "And next to Porlock, Frank, my anxiety is about you."

"Upon my honour, aunt, I am very much obliged. I shall be all right, you'll see."

"Greshamsbury, my dear boy, is not now what it used to be."

"Isn't it?" asked Frank.

"No, Frank; by no means. I do not wish to say a word to you against your father. It may, perhaps, have been his misfortune, rather than his fault—"

"She is always down on the governor, always," said Frank to himself; resolving to stick bravely to the side of the house to which he had elected to belong.

"But there is the fact, Frank, too plain to us all; Greshamsbury is not what it was. It is your duty to restore it to its former importance."

"My duty!" said Frank, rather puzzled.

"Yes, Frank, your duty. It all depends on you now. Of course you know that your father owes a great deal of money."

Frank muttered something. Tidings had in some shape reached his ears that his father was not comfortably circumstanced as regarded money.

"And then, he has sold Boxall Hill. It cannot be expected that Boxall Hill shall be re-purchased, as some horrid man, a railway maker, I believe—"

"Yes; that's Scatcherd."

"Well, he has built a house there I'm told; so I presume that it cannot be bought back: but it will be your duty, Frank, to pay all the debts that there are on the property, and to purchase what, at any rate, will be equal to Boxall Hill."

Frank opened his eyes wide and stared at his aunt, as though doubting much whether or no she were in her right mind. He pay off the family debts! He buy up property of four thousand pounds a-year! He remained, however, quite quiet, waiting the elucidation of the mystery.

"Frank, of course you understand me."

Frank was obliged to declare, that just at the present moment he did not find his aunt so clear as usual.

"You have but one line of conduct left you, Frank: your

position, as heir to Greshamsbury, is a good one; but your father has unfortunately so hampered you with regard to money, that unless you set the matter right yourself, you can never enjoy that position. Of course you must marry money."

"Marry money!" said he, considering for the first time that in all probability Mary Thorne's fortune would not be extensive. "Marry money!"

"Yes, Frank. I know no man whose position so imperatively demands it; and, luckily for you, no man can have more facility for doing so. In the first place, you are very handsome."

Frank blushed like a girl of sixteen.

"And then, as the matter is made plain to you at so early an age, you are not of course hampered by any indiscreet tie; by any absurd engagement."

Frank blushed again; and then saying to himself, "How much the old girl knows about it!" felt a little proud of his passion for Mary Thorne, and of the declaration he had made to her.

"And your connexion with Courcy Castle," continued the countess, now carrying up the list of Frank's advantages to its great climax, "will make the matter so easy for you, that, really, you will hardly have any difficulty."

Frank could but say how much obliged he felt to Courcy Castle and its inmates.

"Of course I would not wish to interfere with you in any underhand way, Frank; but I will tell you what has occurred to me. You have heard, probably, of Miss Dunstable?"

"The daughter of the ointment of Lebanon man?"

"And of course you know that her fortune is immense," continued the countess, not deigning to notice her nephew's allusion to the ointment. "Quite immense when compared with the wants and position of any commoner. Now she is coming to Courcy Castle, and I wish you to come and meet her."

"But, aunt, just at this moment I have to read for my degree like anything. I go up, you know, in October."

"Degree!" said the countess. "Why, Frank, I am talking to you of your prospects in life, of your future position, of that on which everything hangs, and you tell me of your degree!"

Frank, however, obstinately persisted that he must take his degree, and that he should commence reading hard at six a.m. to-morrow morning.

"You can read just as well at Courcy Castle. Miss Dunstable will not interfere with that," said his aunt, who knew the expediency of yielding occasionally; "but I must beg you will come over and meet her. You will find her a most charming young woman, remarkably well educated I am told, and—"

"How old is she?" asked Frank.

"I really cannot say exactly," said the countess; "but it is not, I imagine, matter of much moment."

"Is she thirty?" asked Frank, who looked upon an unmarried woman of that age as quite an old maid.

"I dare say she may be about that age," said the countess, who regarded the subject from a very different point of view.

"Thirty!" said Frank out loud, but speaking, nevertheless, as though to himself.

"It is a matter of no moment," said his aunt, almost angrily. "When the subject itself is of such vital importance, objections of no real weight should not be brought into view. If you wish to hold up your head in the country; if you wish to represent your county in parliament, as has been done by your father, your grandfather, and your great-grandfathers; if you wish to keep a house over your head, and to leave Greshamsbury to your son after you, you must marry money. What does it signify whether Miss Dunstable be twenty-eight or thirty? She has got money; and if you marry her, you may then consider that your position in life is made."

Frank was astonished at his aunt's eloquence; but, in spite of that eloquence, he made up his mind that he would not marry Miss Dunstable. How could he, indeed, seeing that his troth was already plighted to Mary Thorne in the presence of his sister? This circumstance, however, he did not choose to plead to his aunt, so he recapitulated any other objections that presented themselves to his mind.

In the first place, he was so anxious about his degree that he could not think of marrying at present; then he suggested that it might be better to postpone the question till the season's hunting should be over; he declared that he could not visit Courcy Castle till he got a new suit of clothes home from the tailor; and, ultimately remembered that he had a particular engagement to go fly-fishing with Mr. Oriel on that day week.

None, however, of these valid reasons were sufficiently potent to turn the countess from her point.

"Nonsense, Frank," said she. "I wonder that you can talk of fly-fishing when the prosperity of Greshamsbury is at stake. You will go with Augusta and myself to Courcy Castle to-morrow."

"To-morrow, aunt!" he said, in the tone in which a condemned criminal might make his ejaculation on hearing that a very near day had been named for execution. "To-morrow!"

"Yes, we return to-morrow, and shall be happy to have your company. My friends, including Miss Dunstable, come on Thursday. I am quite sure you will like Miss Dunstable. I have settled all that with your mother, so we need say nothing further about it. And now good night, Frank."

Frank, finding that there was nothing more to be said, took his departure, and went out to look for Mary. But Mary had gone home with Janet half an hour since, so he betook himself to his sister Beatrice.

"Beatrice," said he, "I am to go to Courcy Castle to-morrow."

"So I heard mamma say."

"Well; I only came of age to-day, and I will not begin by running counter to them. But I tell you what, I won't stay above a week at Courcy Castle for all the De Courcys in Barsetshire. Tell me, Beatrice, did you ever hear of a Miss Dunstable?"

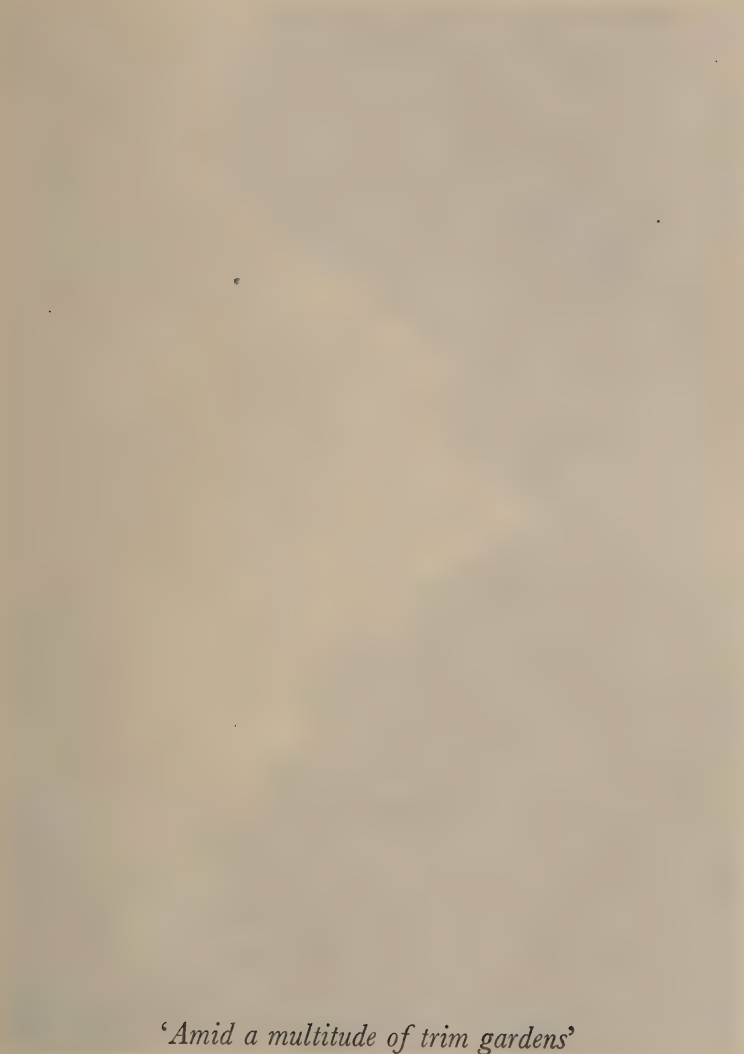
CHAPTER IX

Sir Roger Scatcherd

ENOUGH has been said in this narrative to explain to the reader that Roger Scatcherd, who was whilom a drunken stone-mason in Barchester, and who had been so prompt to avenge the injury done to his sister, had become a great man in the world. He had become a contractor, first for little things, such as half a mile or so of a railway embankment, or three or four canal bridges, and then a contractor for great things, such as government hospitals, locks, docks, and quays, and had latterly had in his hands the making of whole lines of railway.

He had been occasionally in partnership with one man for one thing, and then with another for another; but had, on the whole, kept his own interests to himself, and now, at the time of our story, he was a very rich man.

And he had acquired more than wealth. There had been a time when the government wanted the immediate performance of some extraordinary piece of work, and Roger Scatcherd had been the man to do it. There had been some extremely necessary bit of a railway to be made in half the time that such work would properly demand, some speculation to be incurred requiring great means and courage as well, and Roger Scatcherd had been found to be the man for the time. He was then elevated for the moment to the dizzy pinnacle of a newspaper hero, and became one of those "whom the king delighteth to honour." He went



'Amid a multitude of trim gardens'

up one day to Court to kiss her Majesty's hand, and came down to his new grand house at Boxall Hill, Sir Roger Scatcherd, Bart.

"And now, my lady," said he, when he explained to his wife the high state to which she had been called by his exertions and the Queen's prerogative, "let's have a bit of dinner and a drop of som'at hot." Now the drop of som'at hot signified a dose of alcohol sufficient to send three ordinary men very drunk to bed.

While conquering the world, Roger Scatcherd had not conquered his old bad habits. Indeed, he was the same man at all points that he had been when formerly seen about the streets of Barchester with his stone-mason's apron tucked up round his waist. The apron he had abandoned, but not the heavy prominent thoughtful brow, with the wildly-flashing eye beneath it. He was still the same good companion, and still also the same hard-working hero. In this only had he changed, that now he would work, and some said equally well, whether he were drunk or sober. Those who were mostly inclined to make a miracle of him—and there was a school of worshippers ready to adore him as their idea of a divine, superhuman, miracle-moving inspired prophet—declared that his wondrous work was best done, his calculations most quickly and most truly made, that he saw with most accurate eye into the far-distant balance of profit and loss, when he was under the influence of the rosy god. To these worshippers his breakings-out as his periods of intemperance were called in his own set, were his moments of peculiar inspiration—his divine frenzies, in which he communicated most closely with those deities who preside over trade transactions; his Eleusinian mysteries, to approach him in which was permitted only to a few of the most favoured.

"Scatcherd has been drunk this week past," they would say one to another, when the moment came at which it was to be decided whose offer should be accepted for constructing a harbour to hold all the commerce of Lanc-

ashire, or to make a railway from Bombay to Canton. "Scatcherd has been drunk this week past: I am told that he has taken over three gallons of brandy." And then they felt sure that none but Scatcherd would be called upon to construct the dock or make the railway.

But be this as it may, be it true or false that Sir Roger was most efficacious when in his cups, there can be no doubt that he could not wallow for a week in brandy, six or seven times every year, without in a great measure injuring, and permanently injuring the outward man. Whatever immediate effect such symposiums might have on the inner mind —symposiums indeed they were not; posiums I will call them, if I may be allowed; for in latter life, when he drank heavily, he drank alone—however little for evil, or however much for good the working of his brain might be affected, his body suffered greatly. It was not that he became feeble or emaciated, old-looking or inactive, that his hand shook, or that his eye was watery; but that in the moments of his intemperance his life was often not worth a day's purchase. The frame which God had given to him was powerful beyond the power of ordinary men; powerful to act in spite of these violent perturbations; powerful to repress and conquer the qualms and headaches and inward sicknesses to which the votaries of Bacchus are ordinarily subject; but this power was not without its limit. If encroached on too far it would break and fall and come asunder, and then the strong man would at once become a corpse.

Scatcherd had but one friend in the world. And, indeed, this friend was no friend in the ordinary acceptance of the word. He neither ate with him nor drank with him, nor even frequently talked with him. Their pursuits in life were wide asunder. Their tastes were all different. The society in which each moved very seldom came together. Scatcherd had nothing in unison with this solitary friend; but he trusted him, and he trusted no other living creature on God's earth.

He trusted this man; but even him he did not trust thoroughly; not at least as one friend should trust another. He believed that this man would not rob him; would probably not lie to him; would not endeavour to make money of him; would not count him up or speculate on him, and make out a balance of profit and loss; and, therefore, he determined to use him. But he put no trust whatever in his friend's counsel, in his modes of thought; none in his theory, and none in his practice. He disliked his friend's counsel, and, in fact, disliked his society, for his friend was somewhat apt to speak to him in a manner approaching to severity. Now Roger Scatcherd had done many things in the world, and made much money; whereas, his friend had done but few things, and made no money. It was not to be endured that the practical efficient man should be taken to task by the man who proved himself to be neither practical nor efficient; not to be endured, certainly, by Roger Scatcherd, who looked on men of his own class as the men of the day, and on himself as by no means the least among them.

The friend was our friend Dr. Thorne.

The doctor's first acquaintance with Scatcherd has been already explained. He was necessarily thrown into communication with the man at the time of the trial, and Scatcherd then had not only sufficient sense, but sufficient feeling also to know that the doctor behaved very well. This communication had in different ways been kept up between them. Soon after the trial Scatcherd had begun to rise, and his first savings had been intrusted to the doctor's care. This had been the beginning of a pecuniary connexion which had never wholly ceased, and which had led to the purchase of Boxall Hill, and to the loan of large sums of money to the squire.

In another way also there had been a close alliance between them, and one not always of a very pleasant description. The doctor was, and long had been, Sir Roger's medical attendant, and, in his unceasing attempts to rescue

the drunkard from the fate which was so much to be dreaded, he not unfrequently was driven into a quarrel with his patient.

One thing further must be told of Sir Roger. In politics he was as violent a Radical as ever, and was very anxious to obtain a position in which he could bring his violence to bear. With this view he was about to contest his native borough of Barchester, with the view of being returned in opposition to the De Courcy candidate; and with this object he had now come down to Boxall Hill.

Nor were his claims to sit for Barchester such as could be despised. If money were to be of avail, he had plenty of it, and was prepared to spend it; whereas, rumour said that Mr. Moffat was equally determined to do nothing so foolish. Then again, Sir Roger had a sort of rough eloquence, and was able to address the men of Barchester in language that would come home to their hearts, in words that would endear him to one party while they made him offensively odious to the other; but Mr. Moffat could make neither friends nor enemies by his eloquence. The Barchester roughs called him a dumb dog that could not bark, and sometimes sarcastically added that neither could he bite. The De Courcy interest however was at his back, and he had also the advantage of possession. Sir Roger, therefore, knew that the battle was not to be won without a struggle.

Dr. Thorne got safely back from Silverbridge that evening, and found Mary waiting to give him his tea. He had been called there to a consultation with Dr. Century, that amiable old gentleman having so far fallen away from the high Fillgrave tenets as to consent to the occasional endurance of such degradation.

The next morning he breakfasted early, and, having mounted his strong iron-grey cob, started for Boxall Hill. Not only had he there to negotiate the squire's further loan, but also to exercise his medical skill. Sir Roger having been declared contractor for cutting a canal from

sea to sea, through the Isthmus of Panama, had been making a week of it; and the consequences were, that Lady Scatcherd had written rather peremptorily to her husband's medical friend.

The doctor consequently trotted off to Boxall Hill on his iron-grey cob. Among his other merits was that of being a good horseman, and he did much of his work on horseback. The fact that he occasionally took a day with the East Barsetshires, and that when he did so he thoroughly enjoyed it, had probably not failed to add something to the strength of the squire's friendship.

"Well, my lady, how is he? Not much the matter, I hope?" said the doctor, as he shook hands with the titled mistress of Boxall Hill in a small breakfast-parlour in the rear of the house. The show rooms of Boxall Hill were furnished most magnificently, but they were set apart for company; and as the company never came—seeing that they were never invited—the grand rooms and the grand furniture were not of much material use to Lady Scatcherd.

"Indeed then, doctor, he's just bad enough," said her ladyship, not in a very happy tone of voice; "just bad enough. There's been a some'at at the back of his head, rapping, and rapping, and rapping; and if you don't do something, I'm thinking it will rap him too hard yet."

"Is he in bed?"

"Why, yes, he is in bed; for when he was first took he couldn't very well help hisself, so we put him to bed. And then, he don't seem to be quite right yet about the legs, so he hasn't got up; but he's got that Winterbones with him to write for him, and when Winterbones is there, Scatcherd might as well be up for any good that bed'll do him."

Mr. Winterbones was confidential clerk to Sir Roger. That is to say, he was a writing machine of which Sir Roger made use to do certain work which could not well be adjusted without some such contrivance. He was a little, withered, dissipated, broken-down man, whom gin and

poverty had nearly burnt to a cinder, and dried to an ash. Mind, he had none left, nor care for earthly things, except the smallest modicum of substantial food, and the largest allowance of liquid sustenance. All that he had ever known he had forgotten, except how to count up figures and to write; the results of his counting and his writing never stayed by him from one hour to another; nay, not from one folio to another. Let him, however, be adequately screwed up with gin, and adequately screwed down by the presence of his master, and then no amount of counting and writing would be too much for him. This was Mr. Winterbones, confidential clerk to the great Sir Roger Scatcherd.

"We must send Winterbones away, I take it," said the doctor.

"Indeed, doctor, I wish you would. I wish you'd send him to Bath, or anywhere else out of the way. There is Scatcherd, he takes brandy; and there is Winterbones, he takes gin; and it'd puzzle a woman to say which is worst, master or man."

It will be seen from this, that Lady Scatcherd and the doctor were on very familiar terms as regarded her little domestic inconveniences.

"Tell Sir Roger I am here, will you?" said the doctor.

"You'll take a drop of sherry before you go up?" said the lady.

"Not a drop, thank you," said the doctor.

"Or, perhaps, a little cordial?"

"Not a drop of anything, thank you; I never do, you know."

"Just a thimbleful of this?" said the lady, producing from some recess under the sideboard a bottle of brandy; "just a thimbleful? It's what he takes himself."

When Lady Scatcherd found that even this argument failed, she led the way to the great man's bed-room.

"Well, doctor! well, doctor! well, doctor!" was the greeting with which our son of Galen was saluted some

time before he entered the sick-room. His approaching step was heard, and thus the ci-devant Barchester stone-mason saluted his coming friend. The voice was loud and powerful, but not clear and sonorous. What voice that is nurtured on brandy can ever be clear? It had about it a peculiar huskiness, a dissipated guttural tone, which Thorne immediately recognised, and recognised as being more marked, more guttural, and more husky than heretofore.

"So you've smelt me out, have you, and come for your fee? Ha! ha! ha! Well, I have had a sharpish bout of it, as her ladyship there no doubt has told you. Let her alone to make the worst of it. But, you see, you're too late, man. I've bilked the old gentleman again, without troubling you."

"Any way, I'm glad you're something better, Scatcherd."

"Something! I don't know what you call something. I never was better in my life. Ask Winterbones there."

"Indeed, now, Scatcherd, you ain't; you're bad enough, if you only knew it. And as for Winterbones, he has no business here up in your bed-room, which stinks of gin so, it does. Don't you believe him, doctor; he ain't well, nor yet nigh well."

Winterbones, when the above ill-natured allusion was made to the aroma coming from his libations, might be seen to deposit surreptitiously beneath the little table at which he sat, the cup with which he had performed them.

The doctor, in the meantime, had taken Sir Roger's hand on the pretext of feeling his pulse, but was drawing quite as much information from the touch of the sick man's skin, and the look of the sick man's eye.

"I think Mr. Winterbones had better go back to the London office," said he. "Lady Scatcherd will be your best clerk for some little time, Sir Roger."

"Then I'll be d—— if Mr. Winterbones does anything of the kind," said he; "so there's an end of that."

"Very well," said the doctor. "A man can die but once.

It is my duty to suggest measures for putting off the ceremony as long as possible. Perhaps, however, you may wish to hasten it."

"Well, I am not very anxious about it, one way or the other," said Scatcherd. And as he spoke there came a fierce gleam from his eye, which seemed to say—"If that's the bugbear with which you wish to frighten me, you will find that you are mistaken."

"Now, doctor, don't let him talk that way, don't," said Lady Scatcherd, with her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Now, my lady, do you cut it; cut at once," said Sir Roger, turning hastily round to his better half; and his better half, knowing that the province of a woman is to obey, did cut it. But as she went she gave the doctor a pull by the coat-sleeve, so that thereby his healing faculties might be sharpened to the very utmost.

"The best woman in the world, doctor; the very best," said he, as the door closed behind the wife of his bosom.

"I'm sure of it," said the doctor.

"Yes, till you find a better one," said Scatcherd. "Ha! ha! ha! But good or bad, there are some things which a woman can't understand, and some things which she ought not to be let to understand."

"It's natural she should be anxious about your health, you know."

"I don't know that," said the contractor. "She'll be very well off. All that whining won't keep a man alive, at any rate."

There then was a pause, during which the doctor continued his medical examination. To this the patient submitted with a bad grace; but still he did submit.

"We must turn over a new leaf, Sir Roger; indeed we must."

"Bother," said he.

"Well, Scatcherd; I must do my duty to you, whether you like it or not."

"That is to say, I am to pay you for trying to frighten me."

"No human nature can stand such shocks as these much longer."

"Winterbones," said the contractor, turning to his clerk, "go down, go down, I say; but don't be out of the way. If you go to the public-house, by G—, you may stay there for me. When I take a drop, that is if I ever do, it does not stand in the way of work." So Mr. Winterbones, picking up his cup again, and concealing it in some way beneath his coat flap, retreated out of the room, and the two friends were alone.

"Scatcherd," said the doctor, "you have been as near your God, as any man ever was who afterwards ate and drank in this world."

"Have I, now?" said the railway hero, apparently somewhat startled.

"Indeed you have; indeed you have."

"And now I'm all right again?"

"All right! How can you be all right, when you know that your limbs refuse to carry you? All right! why the blood is still beating round your brain with a violence that would destroy any other brain but yours."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Scatcherd. He was very proud of thinking himself to be differently organized from other men. "Ha! ha! ha! Well, and what am I to do now?"

The whole of the doctor's prescription we will not give at length. To some of his ordinances Sir Roger promised obedience; to others he objected violently, and to one or two he flatly refused to listen. The great stumbling-block was this, that total abstinence from business for two weeks was enjoined; and that it was impossible, so Sir Roger said, that he should abstain for two days.

"If you work," said the doctor, "in your present state, you will certainly have recourse to the stimulus of drink; and if you drink, most assuredly you will die."

"Stimulus! Why, do you think I can't work without Dutch courage?"

"Scatcherd, I know that there is brandy in the room at

this moment, and that you have been taking it within these two hours."

"You smell that fellow's gin," said Scatcherd.

"I feel the alcohol working within your veins," said the doctor, who still had his hand on his patient's arm.

Sir Roger turned himself roughly in the bed so as to get away from his Mentor, and then he began to threaten in his turn.

"I'll tell you what it is, doctor; I've made up my mind, and I'll do it. I'll send for Fillgrave."

"Very well," said he of Greshamsbury, "send for Fillgrave. Your case is one in which even he can hardly go wrong."

"You think you can Hector me, and do as you like because you had me under your thumb in other days. You're a very good fellow, Thorne, but I ain't sure that you are the best doctor in all England."

"You may be sure I am not; you may take me for the worst if you will. But while I am here as your medical adviser, I can only tell you the truth to the best of my thinking. Now the truth is this, that another bout of drinking will in all probability kill you; and any recourse to stimulus in your present condition may do so."

"I'll send for Fillgrave—"

"Well, send for Fillgrave, only do it at once. Believe me at any rate in this, that whatever you do, you should do at once. Oblige me in this; let Lady Scatcherd take away that brandy bottle till Dr. Fillgrave comes."

"I'm d—— if I do. Do you think I can't have a bottle of brandy in my room without swigging?"

"I think you'll be less likely to swig it if you can't get at it."

Sir Roger made another angry turn in his bed as well as his half-paralyzed limbs would let him; and then, after a few moments' peace, renewed his threats with increased violence.

"Yes; I'll have Fillgrave over here. If a man be ill, really

ill, he should have the best advice he can get. I'll have Fillgrave, and I'll have that other fellow from Silverbridge to meet him. What's his name?—Century."

The doctor turned his head away; for though the occasion was serious, he could not help smiling at the malicious vengeance with which his friend proposed to gratify himself.

"I will; and Rerechild too. What's the expense? I suppose five or six pound a-piece will do it; eh, Thorne?"

"Oh, yes; that will be liberal I should say. But, Sir Roger, will you allow me to suggest what you ought to do? I don't know how far you may be joking—"

"Joking!" shouted the baronet; "you tell a man he's dying and joking in the same breath. You'll find I'm not joking."

"Well, I dare say not. But if you have not full confidence in me—"

"I have no confidence in you at all."

"Then why not send to London? Expense is no object to you."

"It is an object; a great object."

"Nonsense! Send to London for Sir Omicron Pie: send for some man whom you will really trust when you see him."

"There's not one of the lot I'd trust so soon as Fillgrave. I've known Fillgrave all my life, and I trust him. I'll send for Fillgrave and put my case in his hands. If any one can do anything for me, Fillgrave is the man."

"Then in God's name send for Fillgrave," said the doctor. "And now good-bye, Scatcherd; and as you do send for him, give him a fair chance. Do not destroy yourself by more brandy before he comes."

"That's my affair, and his; not yours," said the patient.

"So be it; give me your hand, at any rate, before I go. I wish you well through it, and when you are well, I'll come and see you."

"Good-bye—good-bye; and look here, Thorne, you'll be talking to Lady Scatcherd downstairs, I know; now, no nonsense. You understand me, eh? no nonsense, you know."

CHAPTER X

Sir Roger's Will

DR. THORNE left the room, and went downstairs, being fully aware that he could not leave the house without having some communication with Lady Scatcherd. He was no sooner within the passage than he heard the sick man's bell ring violently; and then the servant, passing him on the staircase, received orders to send a mounted messenger immediately to Barchester. Dr. Fillgrave was to be summoned to come as quickly as possible to the sick man's room, and Mr. Winterbones was to be sent up to write the note.

Sir Roger was quite right in supposing that there would be some words between the doctor and her ladyship. How, indeed, was the doctor to get out of the house without such, let him wish it ever so much? There were words; and these were protracted, while the doctor's cob was being ordered round, till very many were uttered which the contractor would probably have regarded as nonsense.

Lady Scatcherd was no fit associate for the wives of English baronets; was no doubt by education and manners much better fitted to sit in their servants' halls; but not on that account was she a bad wife or a bad woman. She was painfully, fearfully anxious for that husband of hers, whom she honoured and worshipped, as it behoved her to do, above all other men. She was fearfully anxious as to his life, and faithfully believed, that if any man could prolong it, it was that old and faithful friend whom she had known to be true to her lord since their early married troubles.

When, therefore, she found that he had been dismissed, and that a stranger was to be sent for in his place, her heart sank low within her.

"But, doctor," she said, with her apron up to her eyes, "you ain't going to leave him, are you?"

Dr. Thorne did not find it easy to explain to her ladyship that medical etiquette would not permit him to remain in attendance on her husband, after he had been dismissed and another physician called in his place.

"Etiquette!" said she, crying. "What's etiquette to do with it when a man is a-killing hisself with brandy?"

"Fillgrave will forbid that quite as strongly as I can do."

"Fillgrave!" said she. "Fiddlestick. Fillgrave, indeed!"

Dr. Thorne could almost have embraced her for the strong feeling of thorough confidence on the one side, and thorough distrust on the other, which she contrived to throw into those few words.

"I'll tell you what, doctor; I won't let the messenger go. I'll bear the brunt of it. He can't do much now he ain't up, you know. I'll stop the boy; we won't have no Fillgraves here."

This, however, was a step to which Dr. Thorne would not assent. He endeavoured to explain to the anxious wife, that after what had passed he could not tender his medical services till they were again asked for.

"But you can slip in as a friend, you know; and then by degrees you can come round him, eh? can't you now, doctor? And as to the payment—"

All that Dr. Thorne said on the subject may easily be imagined. And in this way, and in partaking of the lunch which was forced upon him, an hour had nearly passed between his leaving Sir Roger's bed-room and putting his foot into the stirrup. But no sooner had the cob begun to move on the gravel-sweep before the house, than one of the upper windows opened, and the doctor was summoned to another conference with the sick man.

"He says you are to come back, whether or no," said Mr. Winterbones, screeching out of the window, and putting all his emphasis on the last words.

"Thorne! Thorne! Thorne!" shouted the sick man from his sick-bed, so loudly that the doctor heard him, seated as he was on horseback out before the house.

"You're to come back, whether or no," repeated Winterbones, with more emphasis, evidently conceiving that there was a strength of injunction in that "whether or no" which would be found quite invincible.

Whether actuated by these magic words, or by some internal process of thought, we will not say; but the doctor did slowly, and as though unwillingly, dismount again from his steed, and slowly retrace his steps into the house.

"It is no use," said he to himself, "for that messenger has already gone to Barchester."

"I have sent for Dr. Fillgrave," were the first words which the contractor said to him when he again found himself by the bedside.

"Did you call me back to tell me that?" said Thorne, who now really felt angry at the impertinent petulance of the man before him: "you should consider, Scatcherd, that my time may be of value to others, if not to you."

"Now don't be angry, old fellow," said Scatcherd, turning to him, and looking at him with a countenance quite different from any that he had shown that day; a countenance in which there was a show of manhood, some show also of affection. "You ain't angry now because I've sent for Fillgrave?"

"Not in the least," said the doctor, very complacently. "Not in the least. Fillgrave will do you as much good as I can do you."

"And that's none at all, I suppose; eh, Thorne?"

"That depends on yourself. He will do you good if you will tell him the truth, and will then be guided by him. Your wife, your servant, any one can be as good a doctor to you as either he or I; as good, that is, in the main point.

But you have sent for Fillgrave now; and of course you must see him. I have much to do, and you must let me go."

Scatcherd, however, would not let him go, but held his hand fast. "Thorne," said he, "if you like it, I'll make them put Fillgrave under the pump directly he comes here. I will indeed, and pay all the damage myself."

This was another proposition to which the doctor could not consent; but he was utterly unable to refrain from laughing. There was an earnest look of entreaty about Sir Roger's face as he made the suggestion; and, joined to this, there was a gleam of comic satisfaction in his eye which seemed to promise, that if he received the least encouragement he would put his threat into execution. Now our doctor was not inclined to taking any steps towards subjecting his learned brother to pump discipline; but he could not but admit to himself that the idea was not a bad one.

"I'll have it done, I will, by heavens! if you'll only say the word," protested Sir Roger.

But the doctor did not say the word, and so the idea passed off.

"You shouldn't be testy with a man when he's ill," said Scatcherd, still holding the doctor's hand, of which he had again got possession; "specially not an old friend; and specially again when you've been a-blowing of him up."

It was not worth the doctor's while to aver that the testiness had all been on the other side, and that he had never lost his good humour; so he merely smiled, and asked Sir Roger if he could do anything further for him.

"Indeed you can, doctor; and that's why I sent for you, why I sent for you yesterday. Get out of the room, Winterbones," he then said gruffly, as though he were dismissing from his chamber a dirty dog. Winterbones, not a whit offended, again hid his cup under his coat tail and vanished.

"Sit down, Thorne, sit down," said the contractor, speaking quite in a different manner from any that he had

yet assumed. "I know you're in a hurry, but you must give me half an hour. I may be dead before you can give me another, who knows?"

The doctor of course declared that he hoped to have many a half hour's chat with him for many a year to come.

"Well, that's as may be. You must stop now, at any rate. You can make the cob pay for it, you know."

The doctor took a chair and sat down. Thus entreated to stop, he had hardly any alternative but to do so.

"It wasn't because I'm ill that I sent for you, or rather let her ladyship send for you. Lord bless you, Thorne; do you think I don't know what it is that makes me like this? When I see that poor wretch, Winterbones, killing himself with gin, do you think I don't know what's coming to myself as well as him?"

"Why do you take it then? Why do you do it? Your life is not like his. Oh, Scatcherd! Scatcherd!" and the doctor prepared to pour out the flood of his eloquence in beseeching this singular man to abstain from his well-known poison.

"Is that all you know of human nature, doctor? Abstain. Can you abstain from breathing, and live like a fish does under water?"

"But Nature has not ordered you to drink, Scatcherd."

"Habit is second nature, man; and a stronger nature than the first. And why should I not drink? What else has the world given me for all I have done for it? What other resource have I? What other gratification?"

"Oh, my God! Have you not unbounded wealth? Can you not do anything you wish? be anything you choose?"

"No," and the sick man shrieked with an energy that made him audible all through the house. "I can do nothing that I would choose to do; be nothing that I would wish to be! What can I do? What can I be? What gratification can I have except the brandy bottle? If I go among gentlemen, can I talk to them? If they have anything to say about a railway, they will ask me a question; if they speak to me be-

yond that, I must be dumb. If I go among my workmen can they talk to me? No, I am their master, and a stern master. They bob their heads and shake in their shoes when they see me. Where are my friends? Here!" said he, and he dragged a bottle from under his very pillow. "Where are my amusements? Here!" and he brandished the bottle almost in the doctor's face. "Where is my one resource, my one gratification, my only comfort after all my toils? Here, doctor; here, here, here!" and, so saying, he replaced his treasure beneath his pillow.

There was something so horrifying in this, that Doctor Thorne shrank back amazed, and was for a moment unable to speak.

"But, Scatcherd," he said at last; "surely you would not die for such a passion as that?"

"Die for it! Ay, would I. Live for it while I can live; and die for it when I can live no longer. Die for it! What is that for a man to do? Do not men die for a shilling a day? What is a man the worse for dying? What can I be the worse for dying? A man can die but once, you said just now. I'd die ten times for this."

"You are speaking now either in madness, or else in folly, to startle me."

"Folly enough, perhaps, and madness enough, also. Such a life as mine makes a man a fool, and makes him mad, too. What have I about me that I should be afraid to die? I'm worth three hundred thousand pounds; and I'd give it all to be able to go to work to-morrow with a hod and mortar, and have a fellow clap his hand upon my shoulder, and say: 'Well, Roger, shall us have that 'ere other half-pint this morning?' I'll tell you what, Thorne, when a man has made three hundred thousand pounds, there's nothing left for him but to die. It's all he's good for then. When money's been made, the next thing is to spend it. Now the man who makes it has not the heart to do that."

The doctor, of course, in hearing all this, said something of a tendency to comfort and console the mind of his

patient. Not that anything he could say would comfort or console the man; but that it was impossible to sit there and hear such fearful truths—for as regarded Scatcherd they were truths—without making some answer.

"This is as good as a play, isn't it, doctor?" said the baronet. "You didn't know how I could come out like one of those actor fellows. Well, now, come; at last I'll tell you why I have sent for you. Before that last burst of mine I made my will."

"You had a will made, before that."

"Yes, I had. That will is destroyed. I burnt it with my own hand, so that there should be no mistake about it. In that will I had named two executors, you and Jackson. I was then partner with Jackson in the York and Yeovil Grand Central. I thought a deal of Jackson then. He's not worth a shilling now."

"Well, I'm exactly in the same category."

"No, you're not. Jackson is nothing without money; but money'll never make you."

"No, nor I shan't make money," said the doctor.

"No, you never will. All the same: there's my other will, there, under that desk there; and I've put you in as sole executor."

"You must alter that, Scatcherd; you must indeed, with three hundred thousand pounds to be disposed of, the trust is far too much for any one man: besides you must name a younger man; you and I are of the same age, and I may die the first."

"Now, doctor, doctor, no humbug; let's have no humbug from you. Remember this; if you're not true, you're nothing."

"Well, but, Scatcherd—"

"Well, but, doctor, there's the will, it's already made. I don't want to consult you about that. You are named as executor, and if you have the heart to refuse to act when I'm dead, why, of course you can do so."

The doctor was no lawyer, and hardly knew whether

he had any means of extricating himself from this position in which his friend was determined to place him.

"You'll have to see that will carried out, Thorne. Now I'll tell you what I have done."

"You're not going to tell me how you've disposed of your property?"

"Not exactly; at least not all of it. One hundred thousand I've left in legacies, including, you know, what Lady Scatcherd will have."

"Have you not left the house to Lady Scatcherd?"

"No; what the devil would she do with a house like this. She doesn't know how to live in it now she has got it. I have provided for her; it matters not how. The house and the estate, and the remainder of my money, I have left to Louis Philippe."

"What, two hundred thousand pounds!" said the doctor.

"And why shouldn't I leave two hundred thousand pounds to my son, even to my eldest son if I had more than one? Does not Mr. Gresham leave all his property to his heir? Why should not I make an eldest son as well as Lord de Courcy or the Duke of Omnium? I suppose a railway contractor ought not to be allowed an eldest son by act of parliament. Won't my son have a title to keep up? And that's more than the Greshams have among them."

The doctor explained away what he said as well as he could. He could not explain that what he had really meant was this, that Sir Roger Scatcherd's son was not a man fit to be trusted with the entire control of an enormous fortune.

Sir Roger Scatcherd had but one child; that child, which had been born in the days of his early troubles, the boy who had been dismissed from his mother's breast in order that the mother's milk might nourish the young heir of Greshamsbury. The boy had grown up, but had become strong neither in mind nor body. His father had determined to make a gentleman of him, and had sent him to Eton and to Cambridge. But even this receipt, generally as

it is recognised, will not make a gentleman. It is hard, indeed, to define what receipt will do so, though people do have in their own minds some certain undefined, but yet tolerably correct ideas on the subject. Be that as it may, two years at Eton, and three terms at Cambridge, did not make a gentleman of Louis Philippe Scatcherd.

Yes; he was christened Louis Philippe, after the King of the French. If one wishes to look out on the world for royal nomenclature, to find children who have been christened after kings and queens, or the uncles and aunts of kings and queens, the search should be made in the families of democrats. None have so servile a deference for the very nail-parings of royalty; none feel so wondering an awe at the exaltation of a crowned head; none are so anxious to secure to themselves some shred or fragment that has been consecrated by the royal touch. It is the distance which they feel to exist between themselves and the throne which makes them covet the crumbs of majesty, the odds and ends and chance splinters of royalty.

There was nothing royal about Louis Philippe Scatcherd but his name. He had now come to man's estate, and his father, finding the Cambridge receipt to be inefficacious, had sent him abroad to travel with a tutor. The doctor had from time to time heard tidings of this youth; he knew that he had already shown symptoms of his father's vices, but no symptoms of his father's talents; he knew that he had begun life by being dissipated, without being generous; and that at the age of twenty-one he had already suffered from delirium tremens.

It was on this account that he had expressed disapprobation, rather than surprise, when he heard that his father intended to bequeath the bulk of his large fortune to the uncontrolled will of this unfortunate boy.

"I have toiled for my money hard, and I have a right to do as I like with it. What other satisfaction can it give me?"

The doctor assured him that he did not at all mean to dispute this.

"Louis Philippe will do well enough you'll find," continued the baronet, understanding what was passing within his companion's breast. "Let a young fellow sow his wild oats while he is young, and he'll be steady enough when he grows old."

"But what if he never lives to get through the sowing?" thought the doctor to himself. "What if that wild-oats operation is carried on in so violent a manner as to leave no strength in the soil for the produce of a more valuable crop?" It was of no use saying this however, so he allowed Scatcherd to continue.

"If I'd had a free fling when I was a youngster, I shouldn't have been so fond of the brandy bottle now. But, any way, my son shall be my heir. I've had the gumption to make the money, but I haven't the gumption to spend it. My son, however, shall be able to ruffle it with the best of them. I'll go bail he shall hold his head higher than ever young Gresham will be able to hold his. They are much of the same age, as well I have cause to remember; and so has her ladyship there."

Now the fact was, that Sir Roger Scatcherd felt in his heart no special love for young Gresham; but with her ladyship, it might almost be a question whether she did not love the youth whom she had nursed almost as well as that other one who was her own proper offspring.

"And will you not put any check on thoughtless expenditure? If you live ten or twenty years, as we hope you may, it will become unnecessary; but in making a will, a man should always remember he may go off suddenly."

"Especially if he goes to bed with a brandy bottle under his head; eh, doctor? But, mind, that's a medical secret, you know; not a word of that out of the bed-room."

Dr. Thorne could but sigh. What could he say on such a subject, to such a man as this?

"Yes, I have put a check upon his expenditure. I will not let his daily bread depend on any man; I have thereupon left him five hundred a-year at his own disposal, from the

day of my death. Let him make what ducks and drakes of that he can."

"Five hundred a-year certainly is not much," said the doctor.

"No; nor do I want to keep him to that. Let him have whatever he wants if he sets about spending it properly. But the bulk of the property—this estate of Boxall Hill, and the Greshamsbury mortgage, and those other mortgages—I have tied up in this way: they shall be all his at twenty-five; and up to that age it shall be in your power to give him what he wants. If he shall die without children before he shall be five-and-twenty years of age, they are all to go to Mary's eldest child."

Now Mary was Sir Roger's sister, the mother, therefore, of Miss Thorne, and, consequently, the wife of the respectable ironmonger who went to America, and the mother of a family there.

"Mary's eldest child!" said the doctor, feeling that the perspiration had nearly broken out on his forehead, and that he could hardly control his feelings. "Mary's eldest child! Scatcherd, you should be more particular in your description, or you will leave your best legacy to the lawyers."

"I don't know, and never heard the name of one of them."

"But do you mean a boy or a girl?"

"They may be all girls for what I know, or all boys; besides, I don't care which it is. A girl would probably do best with it. Only you'd have to see that she married some decent fellow; you'd be her guardian."

"Pooh, nonsense," said the doctor. "Louis will be five-and-twenty in a year or two."

"In about four years."

"And for all that's come and gone yet, Scatcherd, you are not going to leave us yourself quite so soon as all that."

"Not if I can help it, doctor; but that's as may be."

"The chances are ten to one that such a clause in your will will never come to bear."

"Quite so; quite so. If I die, Louis Philippe won't; but I thought it right to put in something to prevent his squandering it all before he comes to his senses."

"Oh! quite right, quite right. I think I would have named a later age than twenty-five."

"So would not I. Louis Philippe will be all right by that time. That's my look out. And now, doctor, you know my will; and if I die to-morrow, you will know what I want you to do for me."

"You have merely said the eldest child, Scatcherd."

"That's all; give it here, and I'll read it to you."

"No, no; never mind. The eldest child. You should be more particular, Scatcherd; you should, indeed. Consider what an enormous interest may have to depend on those words."

"Why, what the devil could I say? I don't know their names; never even heard them. But the eldest is the eldest, all the world over. Perhaps I ought to say the youngest, seeing that I am only a railway contractor."

Scatcherd began to think that the doctor might now as well go away and leave him to the society of Winterbones and the brandy; but, much as our friend had before expressed himself in a hurry, he now seemed inclined to move very leisurely. He sat there by the bedside, resting his hands on his knees, and gazing unconsciously at the counterpane. At last he gave a deep sigh, and then he said, "Scatcherd, you must be more particular in this. If I am to have anything to do with it, you must, indeed, be more explicit."

"Why, how the deuce can I be more explicit? Isn't her eldest living child plain enough, whether he be Jack, or she be Gill?"

"What did your lawyer say to this, Scatcherd? "

"Lawyer! You don't suppose I let my lawyer know what I was putting. No; I got the form and the paper, and all that from him, and had him here, in one room, while Winterbones and I did it in another. It's all right enough. Though

Winterbones wrote it, he did it in such a way he did not know what he was writing."

The doctor sat a while longer, still looking at the counterpane, and then got up to depart. "I'll see you again soon," said he; "to-morrow, probably."

"To-morrow!" said Sir Roger, not at all understanding why Dr. Thorne should talk of returning so soon. "To-morrow! why, I ain't so bad as that man, am I? If you come so often as that you'll ruin me."

"Oh, not as a medical man; not as that; but about this will, Scatcherd. I must think it over; I must, indeed."

"You need not give yourself the least trouble in the world about my will till I'm dead; not the least. And who knows—may be, I may be settling your affairs yet; eh, doctor? looking after your niece when you're dead and gone, and getting a husband for her, eh? Ha! ha! ha!"

And then, without further speech, the doctor went his way.

CHAPTER XI

The Doctor Drinks his Tea

THE doctor got on his cob and went his way, returning duly to Greshamsbury. But, in truth, as he went he hardly knew whither he was going, or what he was doing. Sir Roger had hinted that the cob would be compelled to make up for lost time by extra exertion on the road; but the cob had never been permitted to have his own way as to pace more satisfactorily than on the present occasion. The doctor, indeed, hardly knew that he was on horseback, so completely was he enveloped in the cloud of his own thoughts.

In the first place, that alternative which it had become him to put before the baronet as one unlikely to occur—

that of the speedy death of both father and son—was one which he felt in his heart of hearts might very probably come to pass.

"The chances are ten to one that such a chance will never be brought to bear." This he had said partly to himself, so as to ease the thoughts which came crowding on his brain; partly, also, in pity for the patient and the father. But now that he thought the matter over, he felt that there were no such odds. Were not the odds the other way? Was it not almost probable that both these men might be gathered to their long account within the next four years? One, the elder, was a strong man, indeed; one who might yet live for years to come if he would but give himself fair play. But then, he himself protested, and protested with a truth too surely grounded, that fair play to himself was beyond his own power to give. The other, the younger, had everything against him. Not only was he a poor, puny creature, without physical strength, one of whose life a friend could never feel sure under any circumstances, but he also was already addicted to his father's vice; he also was already killing himself with alcohol.

And, then, if these two men did die within the prescribed period, if this clause in Sir Roger's will were brought to bear, if it should become his, Dr. Thorne's, duty to see that clause carried out, how would he be bound to act? That woman's eldest child was his own niece, his adopted bairn, his darling, the pride of his heart, the cynosure of his eye, his child also, his own Mary. Of all his duties on this earth, next to that one great duty to his God and conscience, was his duty to her. What, under these circumstances, did his duty to her require of him?

But then, that one great duty, that duty which she would be the first to expect from him; what did that demand of him? Had Scatcherd made his will without saying what its clauses were, it seemed to Thorne that Mary must have been the heiress, should that clause become necessarily operative. Whether she were so or not would at any rate

be for lawyers to decide. But now the case was very different. This rich man had confided in him, and would it not be a breach of confidence, an act of absolute dishonesty—an act of dishonesty both to Scatcherd and to that far-distant American family, to that father who, in former days, had behaved so nobly, and to that eldest child of his, would it not be gross dishonesty to them all if he allowed this man to leave a will by which his property might go to a person never intended to be his heir?

Long before he had arrived at Greshamsbury his mind on this point had been made up. Indeed, it had been made up while sitting there by Scatcherd's bedside. It had not been difficult to make up his mind to so much; but then, his way out of this dishonesty was not so easy for him to find. How should he set this matter right so as to inflict no injury on his niece, and no sorrow on himself—if that indeed could be avoided?

And then other thoughts crowded on his brain. He had always professed—professed at any rate to himself and to her—that of all the vile objects of a man's ambition, wealth, wealth merely for its own sake, was the vilest. They, in their joint school of inherent philosophy, had progressed to ideas which they might find it not easy to carry out should they be called on by events to do so. And if this would have been difficult to either when acting on behalf of self alone, how much more difficult when one might have to act for the other! This difficulty had now come to the uncle. Should he, in this emergency, take upon himself to fling away the golden chance which might accrue to his niece if Scatcherd should be encouraged to make her partly his heir?

"He'd want her to go and live there—to live with him and his wife. All the money in the Bank of England would not pay her for such misery," said the doctor to himself, as he slowly rode into his own yard.

On one point, and one only, had he definitely made up his mind. On the following day he would go over again to

Boxall Hill, and would tell Scatcherd the whole truth. Come what might, the truth must be the best. And so, with some gleam of comfort, he went into the house, and found his niece was in the drawing-room with Patience Oriel.

"Mary and I have been quarrelling," said Patience. "She says the doctor is the greatest man in a village; and I say the parson is, of course."

"I only say that the doctor is the most looked after," said Mary. "There's another horrid message for you to go to Silverbridge, uncle. Why can't that Dr. Century manage his own people?"

" She says," continued Miss Oriel, "that if a parson was away for a month, no one would miss him; but that a doctor is so precious that his very minutes are counted."

"I am sure uncle's are. They begrudge him his meals. Mr. Oriel never gets called away to Silverbridge."

"No; we in the church manage our parish arrangements better than you do. We don't let strange practitioners in among our flocks because the sheep may chance to fancy them. Our sheep have to put up with our spiritual doses whether they like them or not. In that respect we are much the best off. I advise you, Mary, to marry a clergyman, by all means."

"I will when you marry a doctor," said she.

"I am sure nothing on earth would give me greater pleasure," said Miss Oriel, getting up and curtseying very low to Dr. Thorne; "but I am not quite prepared for the agitation of an offer this morning, so I'll run away."

And so she went; and the doctor, getting on his other horse, started again for Silverbridge, wearily enough. "She's happy now where she is," said he to himself, as he rode along. "They all treat her there as an equal at Greshamsbury. What though she be no cousin to the Thornes of Ullathorne. She has found her place there among them all, and keeps it on equal terms with the best of them. There is Miss Oriel; her family is high; she is rich, fashionable, a beauty, courted by every one; but yet she does not look

down on Mary. They are equal friends together. But how would it be if she were taken to Boxall Hill, even as a recognised niece of the rich man there? Would Patience Oriel and Beatrice Gresham go there after her? Could she be happy there as she is in my house here, poor though it be? It would kill her to pass a month with Lady Scatcherd and put up with that man's humours, to see his mode of life, to be dependent on him, to belong to him." And then the doctor, hurrying on to Silverbridge, again met Dr. Century at the old lady's bedside, and having made his endeavours to stave off the inexorable coming of the grim visitor, again returned to his own niece and his own drawing-room.

"You must be dead, uncle," said Mary, as she poured out his tea for him, and prepared the comforts of that most comfortable meal—tea, dinner, and supper, all in one. "I wish Silverbridge was fifty miles off."

"That would only make the journey worse; but I am not dead yet, and, what is more to the purpose, neither is my patient." And as he spoke he contrived to swallow a jorum of scalding tea, containing in measure somewhat near a pint. Mary, not a whit amazed at this feat, merely refilled the jorum without any observation; and the doctor went on stirring the mixture with his spoon, evidently oblivious that any ceremony had been performed by either of them since the first supply had been administered to him.

When the clatter of knives and forks was over, the doctor turned himself to the hearthrug, and putting one leg over the other, he began to nurse it as he looked with complacency at his third cup of tea, which stood untasted beside him. The fragments of the solid banquet had been removed, but no sacrilegious hand had been laid on the teapot and cream-jug.

"Mary," said he, "suppose you were to find out to-morrow morning that, by some accident, you had become a great heiress, would you be able to suppress your exultation?"

"The first thing I'd do, would be to pronounce a positive edict that you should never go to Silverbridge again; at least, without a day's notice."

"Well, and what next? what would you do next?"

"The next thing—the next thing would be to send to Paris for a French bonnet exactly like the one Patience Oriel had on. Did you see it?"

"Well, I can't say I did; bonnets are invisible now; besides, I never remark anybody's clothes, except yours."

"Oh! do look at Miss Oriel's bonnet the next time you see her. I cannot understand why it should be so, but I am sure of this—no English fingers could put together such a bonnet as that; and I am nearly sure that no French fingers could do it in England."

"But you don't care so much about bonnets, Mary!" This the doctor said as an assertion; but there was, nevertheless, somewhat of a question involved in it.

"Don't I, though?" said she. "I do care very much about bonnets; especially since I saw Patience this morning. I asked her how much it cost—guess."

"Oh! I don't know—a pound?"

"A pound, uncle!"

"What! a great deal more? Ten pounds?"

"Oh, uncle!"

"What! more than ten pounds? Then I don't think even Patience Oriel ought to give it."

" No, of course she would not; but, uncle, it really cost a hundred francs!"

"Oh! a hundred francs; that's four pounds, isn't it? Well, and how much did your last new bonnet cost?"

"Mine! oh, nothing—five and nine-pence, perhaps; I trimmed it myself. If I were left a great fortune, I'd send to Paris to-morrow; no, I'd go myself to Paris to buy a bonnet, and I'd take you with me to choose it."

The doctor sat silent for a while meditating about this, during which he unconsciously absorbed the tea beside him; and Mary again replenished his cup.

"Come, Mary," said he at last, "I'm in a generous mood; and as I am rather more rich than usual, we'll send to Paris for a French bonnet. The going for it must wait a while longer I am afraid."

"You're joking."

"No, indeed. If you know the way to send—that I must confess would puzzle me; but if you'll manage the sending, I'll manage the paying; and you shall have a French bonnet."

"Uncle!" said she, looking up at him.

"Oh, I'm not joking; I owe you a present, and I'll give you that."

"And if you do, I'll tell you what I'll do with it. I'll cut it into fragments, and burn them before your face: why, uncle, what do you take me for? You're not a bit nice to-night to make such an offer as that to me; not a bit, not a bit." And then she came over from her seat at the tea-tray and sat down on a foot-stool close at his knee. "Because I'd have a French bonnet if I had a large fortune, is that a reason why I should like one now? If you were to pay four pounds for a bonnet for me, it would scorch my head every time I put it on."

"I don't see that: four pounds would not ruin me. However, I don't think you'd look a bit better if you had it; and, certainly, I should not like to scorch these locks," and putting his hand upon her shoulders he played with her hair.

"Patience has a pony-phaeton, and I'd have one if I were rich; and I'd have all my books bound as she does; and, perhaps, I'd give fifty guineas for a dressing-case."

"Fifty guineas!"

"Patience did not tell me; but so Beatrice says. Patience showed it to me once, and it is a darling. I think I'd have the dressing-case before the bonnet. But, uncle—"

"Well?"

"You don't suppose I want such things?"

"Not improperly. I am sure you do not."

"Not properly, or improperly; not much, or little. I covet many things; but nothing of that sort. You know, or should know that I do not. Why did you talk of buying a French bonnet for me?"

Dr. Thorne did not answer this question, but went on nursing his leg.

"After all," said he, "money is a fine thing."

"Very fine, when it is well come by," she answered; "that is, without detriment to the heart or soul."

"I should be a happier man if you were provided for as is Miss Oriel. Suppose now, I could give you up to a rich man who would be able to insure you against all wants?"

"Insure me against all wants! Oh, that would be a man. That would be selling me, wouldn't it, uncle? Yes, selling me; and the price you would receive would be freedom from future apprehensions as regards me. It would be a cowardly sale for you to make; and then, as to me—me the victim. No, uncle; you must bear the misery of having to provide for me—bonnets and all—we are in the same boat, and you shan't turn me overboard."

"But if I were to die, what would you do then?"

"And if I were to die, what would you do? People must be bound together. They must depend on each other. Of course, misfortunes may come; but it is cowardly to be afraid of them beforehand. You and I are bound together, uncle; and though you say these things to tease me, I know you do not wish to get rid of me."

"Well, well; we shall win through, doubtless; if not in one way, then in another."

"Win through! Of course we shall; who doubts our winning; but, uncle—"

"But, Mary."

"Well?"

"You haven't got another cup of tea, have you?"

"Oh, uncle! you have had five."

"No, my dear! not five; only four—only four, I assure

you; I have been very particular to count. I had one while I was—"

"Five, uncle; indeed, and indeed."

"Well, then, as I hate the prejudice which attaches luck to an odd number, I'll have a sixth to show that I am not superstitious."

While Mary was preparing the sixth jorum, there came a knock at the door. Those late summonses were hateful to Mary's ear, for they were usually the forerunners of a midnight ride through the dark lanes to some farmer's house. The doctor had been in the saddle all day, and, as Janet brought the note into the room, Mary stood up as though to defend her uncle from any further invasion on his rest.

"A note from the house, miss," said Janet: now " the house," in Greshamsbury parlance, always meant the squire's mansion.

"No one ill at the house, I hope," said the doctor, taking the note from Mary's hand. "Oh—ah—yes; it's from the squire—there's nobody ill: wait a minute, Janet, and I'll write a line. Mary lend me your desk."

The squire, anxious as usual for money, had written to ask what success the doctor had had in negotiating the new loan with Sir Roger. The fact, however, was, that in his visit at Boxall Hill, the doctor had been altogether unable to bring on the carpet the matter of this loan. Subjects had crowded themselves in too quickly during that interview —those two interviews at Sir Roger's bedside—and he had been obliged to leave without even alluding to the subject.

"I must at any rate go back now," said he to himself. So he wrote to the squire, saying that he was to be at Boxall Hill again on the following day, and that he would call at the house on his return.

"That's settled, at any rate," said he.

"What's settled?" said Mary.

"Why, I must go to Boxall Hill again to-morrow. I must

go early, too, so we'd better both be off to bed. Tell Janet I must breakfast at half-past seven."

"You couldn't take me, could you? I should so like to see that Sir Roger."

"To see Sir Roger! Why he's ill in bed."

"That's an objection, certainly; but some day, when he's well, could not you take me over? I have the greatest desire to see a man like that. A man who began with nothing and has now more than enough to buy the whole parish of Greshamsbury."

"I don't think you'd like him at all."

"Why not? I am sure I should; I am sure I should like him, and Lady Scatcherd, too. I've heard you say that she is an excellent woman."

"Yes, in her way; and he, too, is good in his way; but they are neither of them in your way, they are extremely vulgar—"

"Oh! I don't mind that; that would make them more amusing; one doesn't go to those sort of people for polished manners."

"I don't think you'd find the Scatcherds pleasant acquaintances at all," said the doctor, taking his bed-candle, and kissing his niece's forehead as he left the room.

CHAPTER XII

When Greek meets Greek then comes the Tug of War

THE doctor, that is our doctor, had thought nothing more of the message which had been sent to that other doctor, Dr. Fillgrave; nor in truth did the baronet. Lady Scatcherd had thought of it, but her husband during the rest of the day was not in a humour which allowed her to remind him that he would soon have a new physician on his hands; so she left the difficulty to arrange itself, waiting in some little trepidation till Dr. Fillgrave should show himself.

It was well that Sir Roger was not dying for want of his assistance, for when the message reached Barchester, Dr. Fillgrave was some five or six miles out of town, at Plumstead; and as he did not get back till late in the evening, he felt himself necessitated to put off his visit to Boxall Hill till the next morning. Had he chanced to have been made acquainted with that little conversation about the pump, he would probably have postponed it even yet a while longer.

He was, however, by no means sorry to be summoned to the bedside of Sir Roger Scatcherd. It was well known at Barchester, and very well known to Dr. Fillgrave, that Sir Roger and Dr. Thorne were old friends. It was very well known to him also, that Sir Roger, in all his bodily ailments, had hitherto been contented to intrust his safety to the skill of his old friend. Sir Roger was in his way a great man, and much talked of in Barchester, and rumour had already reached the ears of the Barchester Galen, that the great railway contractor was ill. When, therefore, he received a peremptory summons to go over to Boxall Hill, he could not but think that some pure light had broken in upon Sir Roger's darkness, and taught him at last where to look for true medical accomplishment.

And then, also, Sir Roger was the richest man in the county, and to county practitioners a new patient with large means is a godsend; how much greater a godsend when he be not only required, but taken also from some rival practitioner, need hardly be explained.

Dr. Fillgrave, therefore, was somewhat elated when, after a very early breakfast, he stepped into the post-chaise which was to carry him to Boxall Hill. Dr. Fillgrave's professional advancement had been sufficient to justify the establishment of a brougham, in which he paid his ordinary visits round Barchester; but this was a special occasion, requiring special speed, and about to produce no doubt a special guerdon, and therefore a pair of post-horses were put into request.

It was hardly yet nine when the post-boy somewhat loudly rang the bell at Sir Roger's door; and then Dr. Fillgrave, for the first time, found himself in the new grand hall of Boxall Hill house.

"I'll tell my lady," said the servant, showing him into the grand dining-room; and there for some fifteen or twenty minutes Dr. Fillgrave walked up and down the length of the Turkey carpet, all alone.

Dr. Fillgrave was not a tall man, and was perhaps rather more inclined to corpulence than became his height. In his stocking-feet, according to the usually-received style of measurement, he was five feet five; and he had a little round abdominal protuberance, which an inch and a half added to the heels of his boots hardly enabled him to carry off as well as he himself would have wished. Of this he was apparently conscious, and this gave to him an air of not being entirely at his ease. There was, however, a personal dignity in his demeanour, a propriety in his gait, and an air of authority in the gestures which should prohibit one from stigmatising those efforts at altitude as a failure. No doubt he did achieve much; but, nevertheless, the effort would occasionally betray itself, and the story of the frog and the ox would irresistibly force itself into one's mind at those

moments when it most behoved Dr. Fillgrave to be magnificent.

But if the bulgy roundness of his person, and the shortness of his legs, in any way detracted from his personal importance, these trifling defects were, he was well aware, more than atoned for by the peculiar dignity of his countenance. If his legs were short, his face was not; if there was any undue preponderance below the waistcoat, all was in due symmetry above the necktie. His hair was grey, not grizzled, nor white, but properly grey; and stood up straight from off his temples on each side with an unbending determination of purpose. His whiskers, which were of an admirable shape, coming down and turning gracefully at the angle of his jaw, were grey also, but somewhat darker than his hair. His enemies in Barchester declared that their perfect shade was produced by a leaden comb. His eyes were not brilliant, but were very effective, and well under command. He was rather short sighted, and a pair of eye-glasses was always on his nose, or in his hand. His nose was long, and well pronounced, and his chin, also, was sufficiently prominent; but the great feature of his face was his mouth. The amount of secret medical knowledge of which he could give assurance by the pressure of those lips was truly wonderful. By his lips, also, he could be most exquisitely courteous, or most sternly forbidding. And not only could he be either the one or the other; but he could at his will assume any shade of difference between the two, and produce any mixture of sentiment.

When Dr. Fillgrave was first shown into Sir Roger's dining-room, he walked up and down the room for a while with easy jaunty step, with his hands joined together behind his back, calculating the price of the furniture, and counting the heads which might be adequately entertained in a room of such noble proportions; but in seven or eight minutes an air of impatience might have been seen to suffuse his face. Why could he not be shown up into the sick man's room? What necessity could there be for keep-

ing him there, as though he were some apothecary with a box of leeches in his pocket? He then rang the bell, perhaps a little violently. "Does Sir Roger know that I am here?" he said to the servant. "I'll tell my lady," said the man, again vanishing.

For five minutes more he walked up and down, calculating no longer the value of the furniture, but that rather of his own importance. He was not wont to be kept waiting in this way; and though Sir Roger Scatcherd was at present a great and a rich man, Dr. Fillgrave had remembered him a very small and a very poor man. He now began to think of Sir Roger as the stone-mason, and to chafe somewhat more violently at being so kept by such a man.

When one is impatient, five minutes is as the duration of all time, and a quarter of an hour is eternity. At the end of twenty minutes the step of Dr. Fillgrave up and down the room had become very quick, and he had just made up his mind that he would not stay there all day to the serious detriment, perhaps fatal injury, of his other expectant patients. His hand was again on the bell, and was about to be used with vigour, when the door opened and Lady Scatcherd entered.

The door opened and Lady Scatcherd entered; but she did so very slowly, as though she were afraid to come into her own dining-room. We must go back a little and see how she had been employed during those twenty minutes.

"Oh laws!" Such had been her first exclamation on hearing that the doctor was in the dining-room. She was standing at the time with her housekeeper in a small room in which she kept her linen and jam, and in which, in company with the same housekeeper, she spent the happiest moments of her life.

"Oh laws! now, Hannah, what shall we do?"

"Send 'un up at once to the master, my lady; let John take 'un up."

"There'll be such a row in the house, Hannah; I know there will."

"But sure-ly didn't he send for 'un? Let the master have the row himself then; that's what I'd do, my lady," added Hannah seeing that her ladyship still stood trembling in doubt, biting her thumb-nail.

"You couldn't go up to the master yourself, could you now, Hannah?" said Lady Scatcherd in her most persuasive tone.

"Why no," said Hannah after a little deliberation; "no, I'm afeard I couldn't."

"Then I must just face it myself." And up went the wife to tell her lord that the physician for whom he had sent had come to attend his bidding.

In the interview which then took place the baronet had not indeed been violent, but he had been very determined. Nothing on earth he said should induce him to see Dr. Fillgrave and offend his dear old friend, Thorne.

"But, Roger," said her ladyship, half crying, or rather pretending to cry in her vexation, "what shall I do with the man? How shall I get him out of the house?"

"Put him under the pump," said the baronet; and he laughed his peculiar low guttural laugh, which told so plainly of the havoc which brandy had made in his throat.

"That's nonsense, Roger; you know I can't put him under the pump. Now you are ill, and you'd better see him just for five minutes. I'll make it all right with Dr. Thorne."

"I'll be d—— if I do, my lady." All the people about Boxall Hill called poor Lady Scatcherd "my lady," as if there was some excellent joke in it: and so, indeed, there was.

"You know you needn't mind nothing he says, nor yet take nothing he sends; and I'll tell him not to come no more; now do 'ee see him, Roger."

But there was no coaxing Roger over; or indeed ever: he was a wilful, headstrong, masterful man; a tyrant always, though never a cruel one; and accustomed to rule his wife and household as despotically as he did his gangs of workmen. Such men it is not easy to coax over.

"You go down and tell him I don't want him, and won't

see him, and that's an end of it. If he chose to earn his money, why didn't he come yesterday when he was sent for? I'm well now, and don't want him; and what's more, I won't have him. Winterbones, lock the door."

So Winterbones, who during this interview had been at work at his little table, got up to lock the door, and Lady Scatcherd had no alternative but to pass through it before the last edict was obeyed.

Lady Scatcherd, with slow step, went down stairs and again sought counsel with Hannah, and the two, putting their heads together, agreed that the only cure for the present evil was to be found in a good fee. So Lady Scatcherd, with a five-pound note in her hand, and trembling in every limb, went forth to encounter the august presence of Dr. Fillgrave.

As the door opened, Dr. Fillgrave dropped the bell-rope which was in his hand, and bowed low to the lady. Those who knew the doctor well, would have known from his bow that he was not well pleased; it was as much as though he said, "Lady Scatcherd, I am your most obedient humble servant; at any rate it appears that it is your pleasure to treat me as such."

Lady Scatcherd did not understand all this; but she perceived at once that the man was angry.

"I hope Sir Roger does not find himself worse," said the doctor. "The morning is getting on; shall I step up and see him?"

"Hem! ha! oh! Why, you see, Dr. Fillgrave, Sir Roger finds himself vastly better this morning, vastly so."

"I am very glad to hear it, very; but as the morning is getting on, shall I step up to see Sir Roger?"

"Why, Dr. Fillgrave; sir, you see, he finds hisself so much hisself this morning, that he a'most thinks it would be a shame to trouble you."

"A shame to trouble me!" This was a sort of shame which Dr. Fillgrave did not at all comprehend. "A shame to trouble me! Why, Lady Scatcherd—"

Lady Scatcherd saw that she had nothing for it but to make the whole matter intelligible. Moreover, seeing that she appreciated more thoroughly the smallness of Dr. Fillgrave's person than she did the peculiar greatness of his demeanour, she began to be a shade less afraid of him than she had thought she should have been.

"Yes, Dr. Fillgrave; you see, when a man like he gets well, he can't abide the idea of doctors: now yesterday, he was all for sending for you; but to-day he's come to hisself, and don't seem to want no doctor at all."

Then did Dr. Fillgrave seem to grow out of his boots, so suddenly did he take upon himself sundry modes of expansive altitude; to grow out of his boots and to swell upwards, till his angry eyes almost looked down on Lady Scatcherd, and each erect hair bristled up towards the heavens.

"This is very singular, very singular, Lady Scatcherd; very singular, indeed; very singular; quite unusual. I have come here from Barchester, at some considerable inconvenience, at some very considerable inconvenience, I may say, to my regular patients; and—and—and—I don't know that anything so very singular ever occurred to me before." And then Dr. Fillgrave, with a compression of his lips which almost made the poor woman sink into the ground, moved towards the door.

Then Lady Scatcherd bethought her of her great panacea. "It isn't about the money, you know, doctor," said she; "of course Sir Roger don't expect you to come here with post-horses for nothing." In this, by-the-by, Lady Scatcherd did not stick quite close to veracity, for Sir Roger, had he known it, would by no means have assented to any payment; and the note which her ladyship held in her hand was taken from her own private purse. "It ain't all about the money, doctor;" and then she tendered the bank-note, which she thought would immediately make all things smooth.

Now Dr. Fillgrave dearly loved a five-pound fee. What

physician is so unnatural as not to love it? He dearly loved a five-pound fee; but he loved his dignity better. He was angry also; and like all angry men, he loved his grievance. He felt that he had been badly treated; but if he took the money he would throw away his right to indulge any such feeling. At that moment his outraged dignity and his cherished anger were worth more to him than a five-pound note. He looked at it with wishful but still averted eyes, and then sternly refused the tender.

"No, madam," said he; "no, no;" and with his right hand raised, with his eye-glasses in it, he motioned away the tempting paper. "No; I should have been happy to have given Sir Roger the benefit of any medical skill I may have, seeing that I was specially called in—"

"But, doctor; if the man's well, you know—"

"Oh, of course; if he's well, and does not choose to see me, there's an end of it. Should he have any relapse, as my time is valuable, he will perhaps oblige me by sending elsewhere. Madam, good morning. I will, if you will allow me, ring for my carriage, that is, post-chaise."

"But, doctor, you'll take the money; you must take the money; indeed you'll take the money," said Lady Scatcherd, who had now become really unhappy at the idea that her husband's unpardonable whim had brought this man with post-horses all the way from Barchester, and that he was to be paid nothing for his time nor costs.

"No, madam; no. I could not think of it. Sir Roger, I have no doubt, will know better another time. It is not a question of money; not at all."

"But it is a question of money, doctor; and you really shall, you must." And poor Lady Scatcherd, in her anxiety to acquit herself at any rate of any pecuniary debt to the doctor, came to personal close quarters with him, with the view of forcing the note into his hands.

"Quite impossible, quite impossible," said the doctor, still cherishing his grievance, and valiantly rejecting the

root of all evil. "I shall not do anything of the kind, Lady Scatcherd."

"Now doctor, do 'ee; to oblige me."

"Quite out of the question." And so, with his hands and hat behind his back, in token of his utter refusal to accept any pecuniary accommodation of his injury, he made his way backwards to the door, her ladyship perseveringly pressing him in front. So eager had been the attack on him, that he had not waited to give his order about the post-chaise, but made his way at once towards the hall.

"Now, do 'ee take it, do 'ee," pressed Lady Scatcherd.

"Utterly out of the question," said Dr. Fillgrave, with great deliberation, as he backed his way into the hall. As he did so, of course he turned round, and he found himself almost in the arms of Dr. Thorne.

As Burley must have glared at Bothwell when they rushed together in that dread encounter on the mountain side; as Achilles may have glared at Hector when at last they met, each resolved to test in fatal conflict the prowess of the other, so did Dr. Fillgrave glare at his foe from Greshamsbury, when, on turning round on his exalted heel, he found his nose on a level with the top button of Dr. Thorne's waistcoat.

And here, if it be not too tedious, let us pause awhile to recapitulate and add up the undoubted grievance of the Barchester practitioner. He had made no effort to ingratiate himself into the sheepfold of that other shepherd-dog; it was not by his seeking that he was now at Boxall Hill; much as he hated Dr. Thorne, full sure as he felt of that man's utter ignorance, of his incapacity to administer properly even a black dose, of his murdering propensities, and his low, mean, unprofessional style of practice; nevertheless, he had done nothing to undermine him with these Scatcherds. Dr. Thorne might have sent every mother's son at Boxall Hill to his long account, and Dr. Fillgrave would not have interfered; would not have interfered unless specially and duly called on to do so.

But he had been specially and duly called on. Before such a step was taken some words must undoubtedly have passed on the subject between Thorne and the Scatcherds. Thorne must have known what was to be done. Having been so called, Dr. Fillgrave had come—had come all the way in a post-chaise—had been refused admittance to the sick man's room, on the plea that the sick man was no longer sick, and just as he was about to retire fee-less—for the want of the fee was not the less a grievance from the fact of its having been tendered and refused—fee-less, dishonoured, and in dudgeon, he encountered this other doctor—this very rival whom he had been sent to supplant—he encountered him in the very act of going to the sick man's room.

What mad fanatic Burley, what god-succoured insolent Achilles, ever had such cause to swell with wrath as at that moment had Dr. Fillgrave? Had I the pen of Molière, I could fitly tell of such medical anger, but with no other pen can it be fitly told. He did swell, and when the huge bulk of his wrath was added to his natural proportions, he loomed gigantic before the eyes of the surrounding followers of Sir Roger.

Dr. Thorne stepped back three steps and took his hat from his head, having, in the passage from the hall-door to the dining-room, hitherto omitted to do so. It must be borne in mind that he had no conception whatever that Sir Roger had declined to see the physician for whom he had sent; none whatever that that physician was now about to return, fee-less, to Barchester.

Dr. Thorne and Dr. Fillgrave were doubtless well-known enemies. All the world of Barchester, and all that portion of the world of London which is concerned with the Lancet and the Scalping Knife, were well aware of this: they were continually writing against each other; continually speaking against each other; but yet they had never hitherto come to that positive personal collision which is held to justify a cut direct. They very rarely saw each other;

and when they did meet, it was in some casual way in the streets of Barchester or elsewhere, and on such occasions their habit had been to bow with very cold propriety.

On the present occasion, Dr. Thorne of course felt that Dr. Fillgrave had the whip hand of him; and, with a sort of manly feeling on such a point, he conceived it to be most compatible with his own dignity to show, under such circumstances, more than his usual courtesy—something, perhaps, amounting almost to cordiality. He had been supplanted, *quoad* doctor, in the house of this rich, eccentric, railway baronet, and he would show that he bore no malice on that account.

So he smiled blandly, as he took off his hat, and in a civil speech he expressed a hope that Dr. Fillgrave had not found his patient to be in any very unfavourable state.

Here was an aggravation to the already lacerated feelings of the injured man. He had been brought thither to be scoffed and scorned at, that he might be a laughing-stock to his enemies, and food for mirth to the vile minded. He swelled with noble anger till he would have burst, had it not been for the opportune padding of his frock-coat.

"Sir," said he, "sir:" and he could hardly get his lips open to give vent to the tumult of his heart. Perhaps he was not wrong; for it may be that his lips were more eloquent than would have been his words.

"What's the matter?" said Dr. Thorne, opening his eyes wide, and addressing Lady Scatcherd over the head and across the hairs of the irritated man below him. "What on earth is the matter? Is anything wrong with Sir Roger?"

"Oh, laws, doctor," said her ladyship. "Oh, laws; I'm sure it ain't my fault. Here's Dr. Fillgrave in a taking, and I'm quite ready to pay him, quite. If a man gets paid, what more can he want?" And she again held out the five-pound note over Dr. Fillgrave's head.

What more, indeed, Lady Scatcherd, can any of us want, if only we could keep our tempers and feelings a little in

abeyance? Dr. Fillgrave, however, could not so keep his; and, therefore, he did want something more, though at the present moment he could have hardly said what.

Lady Scatcherd's courage was somewhat resuscitated by the presence of her ancient, trusty ally; and, moreover, she began to conceive that the little man before her was unreasonable beyond all conscience in his anger, seeing that that for which he was ready to work had been offered to him without any work at all.

"Madam," said he, again turning round at Lady Scatcherd, "I was never before treated in such a way in any house in Barsetshire—never—never."

"Good heavens, Dr. Fillgrave," said he of Greshamsbury, "what is the matter?"

"I'll let you know what is the matter, sir," said he, turning round again as quickly as before. "I'll let you know what is the matter. I'll publish this, sir, to the medical world;" and as he shrieked out the words of the threat, he stood on tiptoes and brandished his eye-glasses up almost into his enemy's face.

"Don't be angry with Dr. Thorne," said Lady Scatcherd. "Any ways, you needn't be angry with him. If you must be angry with anybody—"

"I shall be angry with him, madam," ejaculated Dr. Fillgrave, making another sudden demi-pirouette. "I am angry with him—or, rather, I despise him;" and completing the circle, Dr. Fillgrave again brought himself round in full front of his foe.

Dr. Thorne raised his eyebrows and looked inquiringly at Lady Scatcherd; but there was a quiet sarcastic motion round his mouth which by no means had the effect of throwing oil on the troubled waters.

"I'll publish the whole of this transaction to the medical world, Dr. Thorne—the whole of it; and if that has not the effect of rescuing the people of Greshamsbury out of your hands, then—then—then, I don't know what will. Is my carriage—that is, post-chaise, there?" and Dr. Fill-

grave, speaking very loudly, turned majestically to one of the servants.

"What have I done to you Dr. Fillgrave," said Dr. Thorne, now absolutely laughing, "that you should determine to take my bread out of my mouth? I am not interfering with your patient. I have come here simply with reference to money matters appertaining to Sir Roger."

"Money matters! Very well—very well; money matters! That is your idea of medical practice! Very well—very well. Is my post-chaise at the door? I'll publish it all to the medical world—every word—every word of it, every word of it."

"Publish what, you unreasonable man?"

"Man! sir; whom do you call a man? I'll let you know whether I'm a man—post-chaise there!"

"Don't 'ee call him names now, doctor; don't 'ee, pray don't 'ee," said Lady Scatcherd.

By this time they had all got somewhat nearer the hall-door; but the Scatcherd retainers were too fond of the row to absent themselves willingly at Dr. Fillgrave's bidding, and it did not appear that any one went in search of the post-chaise.

"Man! sir; I'll let you know what it is to speak to me in that style. I think, sir, you hardly know who I am."

"All that I know of you at present is, that you are my friend Sir Roger's physician, and I cannot conceive what has occurred to make you so angry." And as he spoke, Dr. Thorne looked carefully at him to see whether that pump discipline had in truth been applied. There were no signs whatever that cold water had been thrown upon Dr. Fillgrave.

"My post-chaise—is my post-chaise there? The medical world shall know all; you may be sure, sir, the medical world shall know it all;" and thus, ordering his post-chaise, and threatening Dr. Thorne with the medical world, Dr. Fillgrave made his way to the door.

But the moment he put on his hat he returned. "No,

madam," said he. "No; it is quite out of the question: such an affair is not to be arranged by such means. I'll publish it all to the medical world—post-chaise there," and then, using all his force, he flung as far as he could into the hall a light bit of paper. It fell at Dr. Thorne's feet, who, raising it, found that it was a five-pound note.

"I put it into his hat just while he was in his tantrum," said Lady Scatcherd. "And I thought that perhaps he would not find it till he got to Barchester. Well, I wish he'd been paid, certainly, although Sir Roger wouldn't see him;" and in this manner Dr. Thorne got some glimpse of understanding into the cause of the great offence.

"I wonder whether Sir Roger will see *me*," said he, laughing.

CHAPTER XIII

The Two Uncles

"HA! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Sir Roger lustily, as Dr. Thorne entered the room. "Well, if that ain't rich, I don't know what is. Ha! ha! ha! But why did not they put him under the pump, doctor?"

The doctor, however, had too much tact, and too many things of importance to say, to allow of his giving up much time to the discussion of Dr. Fillgrave's wrath. He had come determined to open the baronet's eyes as to what would be the real effect of his will, and he had also to negotiate a loan for Mr. Gresham, if that might be possible. Dr. Thorne therefore began about the loan, that being the easier subject, and found that Sir Roger was quite clear headed as to his money concerns, in spite of his illness. Sir Roger was willing enough to lend Mr. Gresham more money—six, eight, ten, twenty thousand; but then, in doing so, he should insist on obtaining possession of the title-deeds.

"What! the title-deeds of Greshamsbury for a few thousand pounds?" said the doctor.

"I don't know whether you call ninety thousand pounds a few thousands; but the debt will about amount to that."

"Ah! that's the old debt."

"Old and new together, of course; every shilling I lend more weakens my security for what I have lent before."

"But you have the first claim, Sir Roger."

"It ought to be first and last to cover such a debt as that. If he wants further accommodation, he must part with his deeds, doctor."

The point was argued backwards and forwards for some time without avail, and the doctor then thought it well to introduce the other subject.

"Well, Sir Roger, you're a hard man."

"No I ain't," said Sir Roger; "not a bit hard; that is, not a bit too hard. Money is always hard. I know I found it hard to come by; and there is no reason why Squire Gresham should expect to find me so very soft."

"Very well; there is an end of that. I thought you would have done as much to oblige me, that is all."

"What! take bad security to oblige you?"

"Well, there's an end of that."

"I'll tell you what; I'll do as much to oblige a friend as any one. I'll lend you five thousand pounds, you yourself, without security at all, if you want it."

"But you know I don't want it; or, at any rate shan't take it."

"But to ask me to go on lending money to a third party, and he over head and ears in debt, by way of obliging you, why, it's a little too much."

"Well, there's an end of it. Now I've something to say to you about that will of yours."

"Oh! that's settled."

"No, Scatcherd; it isn't settled. It must be a great deal more settled before we have done with it, as you'll find when you hear what I have to tell you."

"What you have to tell me!" said Sir Roger, sitting up in bed; "and what have you to tell me?"

"Your will says your sister's eldest child."

"Yes; but that's only in the event of Louis Philippe dying before he is twenty-five."

"Exactly; and now I know something about your sister's eldest child, and, therefore, I have come to tell you."

"You know something about Mary's eldest child?"

"I do, Scatcherd, it is a strange story, and may be it will make you angry. I cannot help it if it does so. I should not tell you this if I could avoid it; but as I do tell you, for your sake, as you will see, and not for my own, I must implore you not to tell my secret to others."

Sir Roger now looked at him with an altered countenance. There was something in his voice of the authoritative tone of other days, something in the doctor's look which had on the baronet the same effect which in former days it had some times had on the stone-mason.

"Can you give me a promise, Scatcherd, that what I tell you shall not be repeated?"

"A promise! Well, I don't know what it's about, you know. I don't like promises in the dark."

"Then I must leave it to your honour; for what I have to say must be said. You remember my brother, Scatcherd?"

Remember his brother! thought the rich man to himself. The name of the doctor's brother had not been alluded to between them since the days of that trial; but still it was impossible but that Scatcherd should well remember him.

"Yes, yes; certainly. I remember your brother," said he. "I remember him well; there's no doubt about that."

"Well, Scatcherd," and, as he spoke, the doctor laid his hand with kindness on the other's arm, "Mary's eldest child was my brother's child as well."

"But there is no such child living," said Sir Roger; and, in his violence, as he spoke he threw from off him the bedclothes, and tried to stand upon the floor. He found, how-

ever, that he had no strength for such an effort, and was obliged to remain leaning on the bed and resting on the doctor's arm.

"There was no such child ever lived," said he. "What do you mean by this?"

Dr. Thorne would say nothing further till he had got the man into bed again. This he at last effected, and then went on with the story in his own way.

"Yes, Scatcherd, that child is alive; and for fear that you should unintentionally make her your heir, I have thought it right to tell you this."

"A girl, is it?"

"Yes, a girl."

"And why should you want to spite her? If she is Mary's child, she is your brother's child also. If she is my niece, she must be your niece too. Why should you want to spite her? Why should you try to do her such a terrible injury?"

"I do not want to spite her."

"Where is she? Who is she? What is she called? Where does she live?"

The doctor did not at once answer all these questions. He had made up his mind that he would tell Sir Roger that this child was living, but he had not as yet resolved to make known all the circumstances of her history. He was not even yet quite aware whether it would be necessary to say that this foundling orphan was the cherished darling of his own house.

"Such a child is, at any rate, living," said he; "of that I give you my assurance; and under your will, as now worded, it might come to pass that that child should be your heir. I do not want to spite her, but I should be wrong to let you make your will without such knowledge, seeing that I am possessed of it myself."

"But where is the girl?"

"I do not know that that signifies."

"Signifies! Yes; it does signify a great deal. But Thorne, Thorne, now that I remember it, now that I can think of

things, it was—was it not you yourself who told me that the baby did not live?"

"Very possibly."

"And was it a lie that you told me?"

"If so, yes; but it is no lie that I tell you now."

"I believed you then, Thorne; then, when I was a poor broken-down day-labourer, lying in gaol, rotting there; but I tell you fairly, I do not believe you now. You have some scheme in this."

"Whatever scheme I may have, you can frustrate by making another will. What can I gain by telling you this? I only do so to induce you to be more explicit in naming your heir."

They both remained silent for a while, during which, the baronet poured out from his hidden resource a glass of brandy, and swallowed it.

"When a man is taken aback suddenly by such tidings as these he must take a drop of something, eh, doctor?"

Dr. Thorne did not see the necessity; but the present, he felt, was no time for arguing the point.

"Come, Thorne, where is the girl? You must tell me that. She is my niece, and I have a right to know. She shall come here, and I will do something for her. By the Lord! I would as soon she had the money as any one else, if she is anything of a good 'un;—some of it, that is. Is she a good 'un?"

"Good!" said the doctor, turning away his face. "Yes; she is good enough."

"She must be grown up now. None of your light skirts, eh?"

"She is a good girl," said the doctor, somewhat loudly and sternly. He could hardly trust himself to say much on this point.

"Mary was a good girl, a very good girl, till—" and Sir Roger raised himself up in his bed with his fist clenched, as though he were again about to strike that fatal blow at the farm-yard gate. "But come, it's no good thinking of that;

you behaved well and manly, always. And so poor Mary's child is alive; at least, you say so."

"I say so, and you may believe it. Why should I deceive you?"

"No, no; I don't see why. But then why did you deceive me before?"

To this the doctor chose to make no answer, and again there was silence for a while.

"What do you call her, doctor?"

"Her name is Mary."

"The prettiest woman's name going; there's no name like it," said the contractor, with an unusual tenderness in his voice. "Mary—yes; but Mary what? What other name does she go by?"

Here the doctor hesitated.

"Mary Scatcherd—eh?"

"No. Not Mary Scatcherd."

"Not Mary Scatcherd! Mary what, then? You, with your d—— pride, wouldn't let her be called Mary Thorne, I know."

This was too much for the doctor. He felt that there were tears in his eyes, so he walked away to the window to dry them unseen. Had he had fifty names, each more sacred than the other, the most sacred of them all would hardly have been good enough for her.

"Mary what, doctor? Come, if the girl is to belong to me, if I am to provide for her, I must know what to call her, and where to look for her."

"Who talked of your providing for her?" said the doctor, turning angrily round at the rival uncle. "Who said that she was to belong to you? She will be no burden to you; you are only told of this that you may not leave your money to her without knowing it. She is provided for—that is, she wants nothing; she will do well enough; you need not trouble yourself about her."

"But if she is Mary's child, Mary's child in real truth, I will trouble myself about her. Who else should do so? For

the matter of that, I'd as soon say her as any of those others in America. What do I care about blood? I shan't mind her being a bastard. That is to say, of course, if she's decently good. Did she ever get any kind of teaching; book learning, or anything of that sort?"

Dr. Thorne at this moment hated his friend the baronet with almost a deadly hatred; that he, rough brute as he was —for he was a rough brute—that he should speak in such language of the angel who gave to that home in Greshamsbury so many of the joys of Paradise—that he should speak of her as in some degree his own, that he should inquire doubtingly as to her attributes and her virtues. And then the doctor thought of her Italian and French readings, of her music, of her nice books, and sweet, lady ways, of her happy companionship with Patience Oriel, and her dear, bosom friendship with Beatrice Gresham. He thought of her grace, and winning manners, and soft, polished, feminine beauty; and, as he did so, he hated Sir Roger Scatcherd, and regarded him with loathing, as he might have regarded a wallowing hog.

At last a light seemed to break in upon Sir Roger's mind. Dr. Thorne, he perceived, did not answer his last question. He perceived, also, that the doctor was affected with some more than ordinary emotion. Why should it be that this subject of Mary Scatcherd's child moved him so deeply? Sir Roger had never been at the doctor's house at Greshamsbury, had never seen Mary Thorne, but he had heard that there lived with the doctor some young female relative; and thus a glimmering light seemed to come in upon Sir Roger's bed.

He had twitted the doctor with his pride; had said that it was impossible that the girl should be called Mary Thorne. What if she were so called? What if she were now warming herself at the doctor's hearth?

"Well, come, Thorne, what is it you call her? Tell it out, man. And, look you, if it's your name she bears, I shall think more of you, a deal more than ever I did yet. Come,

Thorne, I'm her uncle too. I have a right to know. She is Mary Thorne, isn't she?"

The doctor had not the hardihood nor the resolution to deny it. "Yes," said he, "that is her name; she lives with me."

"Yes, and lives with all those grand folks at Greshamsbury, too. I have heard of that."

"She lives with me, and belongs to me, and is as my daughter."

"She shall come over here. Lady Scatcherd shall have her to stay with her. She shall come to us. And as for my will, I'll make another. I'll—"

"Yes, make another will—or else alter that one. But as to Miss Thorne coming here—"

"What! Mary—"

"Well, Mary. As to Mary Thorne coming here, that I fear it will not be possible. She cannot have two homes. She has cast her lot with one of her uncles, and she must remain with him now."

"Do you mean to say she must never have any relation but one?"

"But one such as I am. She would not be happy over here. She does not like new faces. You have enough depending on you; I have but her."

"Enough! why I have only got Louis Philippe. I could provide for a dozen girls."

"Well, well, well, we will not talk about that."

"Ah! but, Thorne, you have told me of this girl now and I cannot but talk of her. If you wished to keep the matter dark, you should have said nothing about it. She is my niece as much as yours. And, Thorne, I loved my sister Mary quite as well as you loved your brother; quite as well."

Any one who might now have heard and seen the contractor would have hardly thought him to be the same man who, a few hours before, was urging that the Barchester physician should be put under the pump.

"You have your son, Scatcherd. I have no one but that girl."

"I don't want to take her from you. I don't want to take her; but surely there can be no harm in her coming here to see us. I can provide for her, Thorne, remember that. I can provide for her without reference to Louis Philippe. What are ten or fifteen thousand pounds to me? Remember that, Thorne."

Dr. Thorne did remember it. In that interview he remembered many things, and much passed through his mind on which he felt himself compelled to resolve somewhat too suddenly. Would he be justified in rejecting, on behalf of Mary, the offer of pecuniary provision which this rich relative seemed so well inclined to make? Or, if he accepted it, would he in truth be studying her interests. Scatcherd was a self-willed, obstinate man—now indeed touched by an unwonted tenderness; but he was one to whose lasting tenderness Dr. Thorne would be very unwilling to trust his darling. He did resolve, that on the whole he should best discharge his duty, even to her, by keeping her to himself, and rejecting, on her behalf, any participation in the baronet's wealth. As Mary herself had said, "some people must be bound together;" and their destiny, that of himself and his niece, seemed to have so bound them. She had found her place at Greshamsbury, her place in the world; and it would be better for her now to keep it, than to go forth and seek another that would be richer, but at the same time less suited to her.

"No, Scatcherd," he said at last, "she cannot come here; she would not be happy here, and, to tell you the truth, I do not wish her to know that she has other relatives."

"Ah! she would be ashamed of her mother, you mean, and of her mother's brother too, eh? She's too fine a lady I suppose to take me by the hand and give me a kiss, and call me her uncle? I and Lady Scatcherd would not be grand enough for her, eh?"

"You may say what you please, Scatcherd; I of course cannot stop you."

"But I don't know how you'll reconcile what you are doing to your conscience. What right can you have to throw away the girl's chance, now that she has a chance? What fortune can you give her?"

"I have done what little I could," said Thorne, proudly.

"Well, well, well, well, I never heard such a thing in my life; never. Mary's child, my own Mary's child, and I'm not to see her! But, Thorne, I tell you what; I will see her. I'll go over to her, I'll go to Greshamsbury, and tell her who I am, and what I can do for her. I tell you fairly I will. You shall not keep her away from those who belong to her, and can do her a good turn. Mary's daughter; another Mary Scatcherd! I almost wish she were called Mary Scatcherd. Is she like her, Thorne? Come, tell me that, is she like her mother?"

"I do not remember her mother; at least not in health."

"Not remember her! ah, well. She was the handsomest girl in Barchester, anyhow. That was given up to her. Well, I didn't ever think to be talking of her again. Thorne, you cannot but expect that I shall go over and see Mary's child?"

"Now Scatcherd, look here," and the doctor, coming away from the window, where he had been standing, sat himself down by the bedside, "you must not come over to Greshamsbury."

"Oh! but I shall."

"Listen to me, Scatcherd. I do not want to praise myself in any way; but when that girl was an infant, six months old, she was like to be a thorough obstacle to her mother's fortune in life. Tomlinson was willing to marry your sister, but he would not marry the child too. Then I took the baby, and I promised her mother that I would be to her as a father. I have kept my word as fairly as I have been able. She has sat at my hearth, and drank of my cup, and been to me as my own child. After that, I have a right to judge

what is best for her. Her life is not like your life, and her ways are not as your ways—"

"Ah, that is just it; we are too vulgar for her."

"You may take it as you will," said the doctor, who was too much in earnest to be in the least afraid of offending his companion. "I have not said so; but I do say that you and she are unlike in your way of living."

"She wouldn't like an uncle with a brandy bottle under his head, eh?"

"You could not see her without letting her know what is the connexion between you; of that I wish to keep her in ignorance."

"I never knew any one yet who was ashamed of a rich connexion. How do you mean to get a husband for her, eh?"

"I have told you of her existence," continued the doctor, not appearing to notice what the baronet had last said, "because I found it necessary that you should know the fact of your sister having left this child behind her; you would otherwise have made a will different from that intended, and there might have been a lawsuit, and mischief and misery when we are gone. You must perceive that I have done this in honesty to you; and you yourself are too honest to repay me by taking advantage of this knowledge to make me unhappy."

"Oh, very well, doctor. At any rate you are a brick, I will say that; but I'll think of all this, I'll think of it; but it does startle me to find that poor Mary has a child living so near to me."

"And now, Scatcherd, I will say good-bye. We part friends, don't we?"

"Oh, but doctor, you ain't going to leave me so; what am I to do? What doses shall I take? How much brandy may I drink? May I have a grill for dinner? D—— me, doctor, you have turned Fillgrave out of the house. You mustn't go and desert me."

Dr. Thorne laughed, and then, sitting himself to write

medically, gave such prescriptions and ordinances as he found to be necessary. They amounted but to this: that the man was to drink, if possible, no brandy; and if that were not possible, then as little as might be.

This having been done, the doctor again proceeded to take his leave; but when he got to the door he was called back. "Thorne! Thorne! About that money for Mr. Gresham; do what you like, do just what you like. Ten thousand, is it? Well, he shall have it. I'll make Winterbones write about it at once. Five per cent. isn't it? No four and a half. Well, he shall have ten thousand more."

"Thank you, Scatcherd, thank you. I am really very much obliged to you, I am indeed. I wouldn't ask it if I were not sure your money is safe. Good-bye, old fellow, and get rid of that bedfellow of yours," and again he was at the door.

"Thorne," said Sir Roger, once more. "Thorne, just come back for a minute. You wouldn't let me send a present, would you, fifty pounds or so, just to buy a few flounces?"

The doctor contrived to escape without giving a definite answer to this question; and then, having paid his compliments to Lady Scatcherd, remounted his cob and rode back to Greshamsbury.

CHAPTER XIV

Sentence of Exile

DR. THORNE did not at once go home to his own house. When he reached the Greshamsbury gates, he sent his horse to its own stable by one of the people at the lodge, and then walked on to the mansion. He had to see the squire on the subject of the forthcoming loan, and he had also to see Lady Arabella.

The Lady Arabella, though she was not personally attached to the doctor with quite so much warmth as some others of her family, still had reasons of her own for not dispensing with his visits to the house. She was one of his patients, and a patient fearful of the disease with which she was threatened. Though she thought the doctor to be arrogant, deficient as to properly-submissive demeanour towards herself, an instigator to marital parsimony in her lord, as one altogether opposed to herself and her interests in Greshamsbury politics, nevertheless, she did feel trust in him as a medical man. She had no wish to be rescued out of his hands by any Dr. Fillgrave, as regarded that complaint of hers, much as she may have desired, and did desire, to sever him from all Greshamsbury councils in all matters not touching the healing art.

Now the complaint of which the Lady Arabella was afraid, was cancer; and her only present confidant in this matter was Dr. Thorne.

The first of the Greshamsbury circle whom he saw was Beatrice, and he met her in the garden.

"Oh, doctor," said she, "where has Mary been this age? She has not been up here since Frank's birthday."

"Well, that was only three days ago. Why don't you go down and ferret her out in the village?"

"So I have done. I was there just now, and found her

out. She was out with Patience Oriel. Patience is all and all with her now. Patience is all very well, but if they throw me over—"

"My dear Miss Gresham, Patience is and always was a virtue."

"A poor, beggarly, sneaking virtue after all, doctor. They should have come up, seeing how deserted I am here. There's absolutely nobody left."

"Has Lady de Courcy gone?"

"Oh, yes! All the De Courcys have gone. I think, between ourselves, Mary stays away because she does not love them too well. They have all gone, and have taken Augusta and Frank with them."

"Has Frank gone to Courcy Castle?"

"Oh, yes; did not you hear? There was rather a fight about it. Master Frank wanted to get off, and was as hard to catch as an eel, and then the countess was offended; and papa said he didn't see why Frank was to go if he didn't like it. Papa is very anxious about his degree, you know."

The doctor understood it all as well as though it had been described to him at full length. The countess had claimed her prey, in order that she might carry him off to Miss Dunstable's golden embrace. The prey, not yet old enough, and wise enough to connect the worship of Plutus with that of Venus, had made sundry futile feints and dodges in the vain hope of escape. Then the anxious mother had enforced the De Courcy behests with all a mother's authority; but the father, whose ideas on the subject of Miss Dunstable's wealth had probably not been consulted, had, as a matter of course, taken exactly the other side of the question. The doctor did not require to be told all this in order to know how the battle had raged. He had not yet heard of the great Dunstable scheme; but he was sufficiently acquainted with Greshamsbury tactics to understand that the war had been carried on somewhat after this fashion.

As a rule, when the squire took a point warmly to heart,

he was wont to carry his way against the De Courcy interest. He could be obstinate enough when it so pleased him, and had before now gone so far as to tell his wife, that her thrice-noble sister-in-law might remain at home at Courcy Castle—or, at any rate, not come to Greshamsbury —if she could not do so without striving to rule him and every one else when she got there. This had of course been repeated to the countess, who had merely replied to it by a sisterly whisper, in which she sorrowfully intimated that some men were born brutes, and always would remain so.

"I think they all are," the Lady Arabella had replied; wishing, perhaps, to remind her sister-in-law that the breed of brutes was as rampant in West Barsetshire as in the Eastern division of the county.

The squire, however, had not fought on this occasion with all his vigour. There had, of course, been some passages between him and his son, and it had been agreed that Frank should go for a fortnight to Courcy Castle.

"We mustn't quarrel with them, you know, if we can help it," said the father; "and, therefore, you must go sooner or later."

"Well, I suppose so; but you don't know how dull it is, governor."

"Don't I?" said Mr. Gresham.

"There's a Miss Dunstable to be there; did you ever hear of her, sir?"

"No, never."

"She's a girl whose father used to make ointment, or something of that sort."

"Oh, yes, to be sure; the ointment of Lebanon. He used to cover all the walls in London. I haven't heard of him this year past."

"No; that's because he's dead. Well, she carries on the ointment now, I believe; at any rate she has got all the money. I wonder what she's like."

"You'd better go and see," said the father, who now

began to have some inkling of an idea why the two ladies were so anxious to carry his son off to Courcy Castle at this exact time. And so Frank had packed up his best clothes, given a last fond look at the new black horse, repeated his last special injunctions to Peter, and had then made one of the stately *cortège* which proceeded through the county from Greshamsbury to Courcy Castle."

"I am very glad of that, very," said the squire, when he heard that the money was to be forthcoming. "I shall get it on easier terms from him than elsewhere; and it kills me to have continual bother about such things." And Mr. Gresham, feeling that that difficulty was tided over for a time, and that the immediate pressure of little debts would be abated, stretched himself on his easy chair as though he were quite comfortable; one may say almost elated.

How frequent it is that men on their road to ruin feel elation such as this! A man signs away a moiety of his substance; nay, that were nothing; but a moiety of the substance of his children; he puts his pen to the paper that ruins him and them; but in doing so he frees himself from a score of immediate little pestering, stinging troubles; and, therefore, feels as though fortune had been almost kind to him.

The doctor felt angry with himself for what he had done when he saw how easily the squire adapted himself to this new loan. "It will make Scatcherd's claim upon you very heavy," said he.

Mr. Gresham at once read all that was passing through the doctor's mind. "Well, what else can I do?" said he. "You wouldn't have me allow my daughter to lose this match for the sake of a few thousand pounds? It will be well at any rate to have one of them settled. Look at that letter from Moffat."

The doctor took the letter and read it. It was a long, wordy, ill-written rigmarole, in which that amorous gentleman spoke with much rapture of his love and devotion for Miss Gresham; but at the same time declared, and most

positively swore, that the adverse cruelty of his circumstances was such, that it would not allow him to stand up like a man at the hymeneal altar until six thousand pounds hard cash had been paid down at his banker's.

"It may be all right," said the squire; "but in my time gentlemen were not used to write such letters as that to each other."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. He did not know how far he would be justified in saying much, even to his friend the squire, in dispraise of his future son-in-law.

"I told him that he should have the money; and one would have thought that that would have been enough for him. Well; I suppose Augusta likes him. I suppose she wishes the match; otherwise I would give him such an answer to that letter as should startle him a little."

"What settlement is he to make?" said Thorne.

"Oh, that's satisfactory enough, couldn't be more so; a thousand a-year and the house at Wimbledon for her; that's all very well. But such a lie, you know, Thorne. He's rolling in money, and yet he talks of this beggarly sum as though he couldn't possibly stir without it."

"If I might venture to speak my mind," said Thorne.

"Well," said the squire, looking at him earnestly.

"I should be inclined to say that Mr. Moffat wants to cry off, himself."

"Oh, impossible; quite impossible. In the first place, he was so very anxious for the match. In the next place, it is such a great thing for him. And then, he would never dare; you see he is dependent on the De Courcys for his seat."

"But suppose he loses his seat?"

"But there is not much fear of that I think. Scatcherd may be a very fine fellow, but I think they'll hardly return him at Barchester."

"I don't understand much about it," said Thorne; "but such things do happen."

"And you believe that this man absolutely wants to

get off the match; absolutely thinks of playing such a trick as that on my daughter; on me?"

"I don't say he intends to do it; but it looks to me as though he were making a door for himself, or trying to make a door: if so, your having the money will stop him there."

"But, Thorne, don't you think he loves the girl? If I thought not—"

The doctor stood silent for a moment, and then he said, "I am not a love-making man myself, but I think that if I were much in love with a young lady, I should not write such a letter as that to her father."

"By heavens! if I thought so," said the squire—"But, Thorne, we can't judge of those fellows as one does of gentlemen; they are so used to making money, and seeing money made, that they have an eye to business in everything."

"Perhaps so, perhaps so," muttered the doctor, showing very evidently that he still doubted the warmth of Mr. Moffat's affection.

"The match was none of my making, and I cannot interfere now to break it off: it will give her a good position in the world; for, after all, money goes a great way, and it is something to be in parliament. I can only hope she likes him. I do truly hope she likes him;" and the squire also showed by the tone of his voice that, though he might hope that his daughter was in love with her intended husband, he hardly conceived it to be possible that she should be so.

And what was the truth of the matter? Miss Gresham was no more in love with Mr. Moffat than you are—oh, sweet, young, blooming beauty! Not a whit more; not, at least, in your sense of the word, nor in mine. She had by no means resolved within her heart that of all the men whom she had ever seen, or ever could see, he was far away the nicest and best. That is what you will do when you are in love if you be good for anything. She had no longing to

sit near to him—the nearer the better; she had no thought of his taste and his choice when she bought her ribbons and bonnets; she had no indescribable desire that all her female friends should be ever talking to her about him. When she wrote to him, she did not copy her letters again and again, so that she might be, as it were, ever speaking to him; she took no special pride in herself because he had chosen her to be his life's partner. In point of fact, she did not care one straw about him.

And yet she thought she loved him; was, indeed, quite confident that she did so; told her mother that she was sure Gustavus would wish this, she knew Gustavus would like that, and so on; but as for Gustavus himself, she did not care a chip for him.

She was in love with her match just as farmers are in love with wheat at eighty shillings a quarter, or shareholders—innocent gudgeons—with seven and a half per cent. interest on their paid-up capital. Eighty shillings a quarter, and seven and a half per cent. interest, such were the returns which she had been taught to look for in exchange for her young heart; and, having obtained them, or being thus about to obtain them, why should not her young heart be satisfied? Had she not sat herself down obediently at the feet of her lady Gamaliel, and should she not be rewarded? Yes, indeed, she shall be rewarded.

And then the doctor went to the lady. On their medical secrets we will not intrude; but there were other matters bearing on the course of our narrative, as to which Lady Arabella found it necessary to say a word or so to the doctor; and it is essential that we should know what was the tenor of those few words so spoken.

How the aspirations, and instincts, and feelings of a household become changed as the young birds begin to flutter with feathered wings, and have half-formed thought of leaving the parental nest! A few months back, Frank had reigned almost autocratic over the lesser subjects of the kingdom of Greshamsbury. The servants, for instance,

always obeyed him, and his sisters never dreamed of telling anything which he directed should not be told. All his mischief, all his troubles, and all his loves were confided to them, with the sure conviction that they would never be made to stand in evidence against him.

Trusting to this well-ascertained state of things, he had not hesitated to declare his love for Miss Thorne before his sister Augusta. But his sister Augusta had now, as it were, been received into the upper house; having duly received, and duly profited by the lessons of her great instructress, she was now admitted to sit in conclave with the higher powers: her sympathies, of course, became changed, and her confidence was removed from the young and giddy and given to the ancient and discreet. She was as a schoolboy, who, having finished his schooling, and being fairly forced by necessity into the stern bread-earning world, undertakes the new duties of tutoring. Yesterday he was taught, and fought, of course, against the schoolmaster; to-day he teaches, and fights as keenly for him. So it was with Augusta Gresham, when, with careful brow, she whispered to her mother that there was something wrong between Frank and Mary Thorne.

"Stop it at once, Arabella; stop it at once," the countess had said; "that, indeed, will be ruin. If he does not marry money, he is lost. Good heavens! the doctor's niece! A girl that nobody knows where she comes from!"

"He's going with you to-morrow, you know," said the anxious mother.

"Yes; and that is so far well: if he will be led by me the evil may be remedied before he returns; but it is very, very hard to lead young men. Arabella, you must forbid that girl to come to Greshamsbury again on any pretext whatever. The evil must be stopped at once."

"But she is here so much as a matter of course."

"Then she must be here as a matter of course no more: there has been folly, very great folly, in having her here. Of course she would turn out to be a designing creature

with such temptation before her; with such a prize within her reach, how could she help it?"

"I must say, aunt, she answered him very properly," said Augusta.

"Nonsense," said the countess; "before you, of course she did. Arabella, the matter must not be left to the girl's propriety. I never knew the propriety of a girl of that sort to be fit to be depended upon yet. If you wish to save the whole family from ruin, you must take steps to keep her away from Greshamsbury now at once. Now is the time; now that Frank is to be away. Where so much, so very much depends on a young man's marrying money, not one day ought to be lost."

Instigated in this manner, Lady Arabella resolved to open her mind to the doctor, and to make it intelligible to him that, under present circumstances, Mary's visits at Greshamsbury had better be discontinued. She would have given much, however, to have escaped this business. She had in her time tried one or two falls with the doctor, and she was conscious that she had never yet got the better of him: and then she was in a slight degree afraid of Mary herself. She had a presentiment that it would not be so easy to banish Mary from Greshamsbury: she was not sure that that young lady would not boldly assert her right to her place in the school-room; appeal loudly to the squire, and, perhaps, declare her determination of marrying the heir out before them all. The squire would be sure to uphold her in that, or in anything else.

And then, too, there would be the greatest difficulty in wording her request to the doctor; and Lady Arabella was sufficiently conscious of her own weakness to know that she was not always very good at words. But the doctor, when hard pressed, was never at fault: he could say the bitterest things in the quietest tone, and Lady Arabella had a great dread of these bitter things. What also if he should desert her himself; withdraw from her his skill and knowledge of her bodily wants and ailments now that he was so

necessary to her? She had once before taken to that measure of sending to Barchester for Dr. Fillgrave, but it had answered with her hardly better than with Sir Roger and Lady Scatcherd.

When, therefore, Lady Arabella found herself alone with the doctor, and called upon to say out her say in what best language she could select for the occasion, she did not feel to be very much at her ease. There was that about the man before her which cowed her, in spite of her being the wife of the squire, the sister of an earl, a person quite acknowledged to be of the great world, and the mother of the very important young man whose affections were now about to be called in question. Nevertheless, there was the task to be done, and with a mother's courage she essayed it.

"Dr. Thorne," said she, as soon as their medical conference was at an end, "I am very glad you came over today, for I had something special which I wanted to say to you:" so far she got, and then stopped; but as the doctor did not seem inclined to give her any assistance, she was forced to flounder on as best she could.

"Something very particular, indeed. You know what a respect and esteem, and I may say affection, we all have for you,"—here the doctor made a low bow—"and I may say for Mary also;" here the doctor bowed himself again. "We have done what little we could to be pleasant neighbours, and I think you'll believe me when I say that I am a true friend to you and dear Mary—"

The doctor knew that something very unpleasant was coming, but he could not at all guess what might be its nature. He felt, however, that he must say something; so he expressed a hope that he was duly sensible of all the acts of kindness he had ever received from the squire and the family at large.

"I hope, therefore, my dear doctor, you won't take amiss what I am going to say."

"Well, Lady Arabella, I'll endeavour not to do so."

"I am sure I would not give any pain if I could help it, much less to you. But there are occasions, doctor, in which duty must be paramount; paramount to all other considerations, you know; and, certainly, this occasion is one of them."

"But what is the occasion, Lady Arabella?"

"I'll tell you, doctor. You know what Frank's position is?"

"Frank's position! as regards what?"

"Why, his position in life; an only son, you know."

"Oh, yes; I know his position in that respect; an only son, and his father's heir; and a very fine fellow he is. You have but one son, Lady Arabella, and you may well be proud of him."

Lady Arabella sighed. She did not wish at the present moment to express herself as being in any way proud of Frank. She was desirous rather, on the other hand, of showing that she was a good deal ashamed of him; only not quite so much ashamed of him as it behoved the doctor to be of his niece.

"Well, perhaps so; yes," said Lady Arabella, "he is, I believe, a very good young man, with an excellent disposition; but, doctor, his position is very precarious; and he is just at that time of life when every caution is necessary."

To the doctor's ears, Lady Arabella was now talking of her son as a mother might of her infant when whooping-cough was abroad, or croup imminent. "There is nothing on earth the matter with him, I should say," said the doctor. "He has every possible sign of perfect health."

"Oh, yes; his health! Yes, thank God, his health is good; that is a great blessing." And Lady Arabella thought of her four flowerets that had already faded. "I am sure I am most thankful to see him growing up so strong. But it is not that I mean, doctor."

"Then what is it, Lady Arabella?"

"Why, doctor, you know the squire's position with regard to money matters?"

Now the doctor undoubtedly did know the squire's position with regard to money matters—knew it much better than did Lady Arabella; but he was by no means inclined to talk on that subject to her ladyship. He remained quite silent, therefore, although Lady Arabella's last speech had taken the form of a question. Lady Arabella was a little offended at this want of freedom on his part, and became somewhat sterner in her tone—a thought less condescending in her manner.

"The squire has unfortunately embarrassed the property, and Frank must look forward to inherit it with very heavy encumbrances; I fear very heavy indeed, though of what exact nature I am kept in ignorance."

Looking at the doctor's face, she perceived that there was no probability whatever that her ignorance would be enlightened by him.

"And, therefore, it is highly necessary that Frank should be very careful."

"As to his private expenditure, you mean," said the doctor.

"No; not exactly that: though of course he must be careful as to that, too; that's of course. But that is not what I mean, doctor; his only hope of retrieving his circumstances is by marrying money."

"With every other conjugal blessing that a man can have, I hope he may have that also." So the doctor replied with imperturbable face; but, not the less did he begin to have a shade of suspicion of what might be the coming subject of the conference. It would be untrue to say that he had ever thought it probable that the young heir should fall in love with his niece; that he had ever looked forward to such a chance, either with complacency or with fear; nevertheless, the idea had of late passed through his mind. Some word that had fallen from Mary, some closely-watched expression of her eye, or some quiver in her lip when Frank's name was mentioned, had of late made him involuntarily think that such might not be impossible; and

then, when the chance of Mary becoming the heiress to so large a fortune had been forced upon his consideration, he had been unable to prevent himself from building happy castles in the air, as he rode slowly home from Boxall Hill. But not a whit the more on that account was he prepared to be untrue to the squire's interest, or to encourage a feeling which must be distasteful to all the squire's friends.

"Yes, doctor; he must marry money."

"And worth, Lady Arabella; and a pure feminine heart; and youth and beauty. I hope he will marry them all."

Could it be possible, that in speaking of a pure feminine heart, and youth and beauty, and such like gew-gaws, the doctor was thinking of his niece? Could it be that he had absolutely made up his mind to foster and encourage this odious match?

The bare idea made Lady Arabella wrathful, and her wrath gave her courage. "He must marry money, or he will be a ruined man. Now, doctor, I am informed that things —words that is—have passed between him and Mary which never ought to have been allowed."

And now also was the doctor wrathful. "What things? what words?" said he, appearing to Lady Arabella as though he rose in his anger nearly a foot in altitude before her eyes. "What has passed between them? and who says so?"

"Doctor, there have been love-makings, you may take my word for it; love-makings of a very, very, very advanced description."

This, the doctor could not stand. No, not for Greshamsbury and its heir; not for the squire and all his misfortunes; not for Lady Arabella and the blood of all the De Courcys could he stand quiet and hear Mary thus accused. He sprang up another foot in height, and expanded equally in width as he flung back the insinuation.

"Who says so? Whoever says so, whoever speaks of Miss Thorne in such language, says what is not true. I will pledge my word——"

"My dear doctor, my dear doctor, what took place was quite clearly heard; there was no mistake about it, indeed."

"What took place? What was heard?"

"Well, then, I don't want, you know, to make more of it than can be helped. The thing must be stopped, that is all."

"What thing? Speak out Lady Arabella. I will not have Mary's conduct impugned by inuendoes. What is it that the eaves-droppers have heard?"

"Dr. Thorne, there have been no eaves-droppers."

"And no tale-bearers either? Will your ladyship oblige me by letting me know what is the accusation which you bring against my niece?"

"There has been most positively an offer made, Dr. Thorne."

"And who made it?"

"Oh, of course I am not going to say but what Frank must have been very imprudent. Of course he has been to blame. There has been fault on both sides, no doubt."

"I utterly deny it. I positively deny it. I know nothing of the circumstances; have heard nothing about it—"

"Then of course you can't say," said Lady Arabella.

"I know nothing of the circumstances; have heard nothing about it," continued Dr. Thorne; "but I do know my niece, and am ready to assert that there has not been fault on both sides. Whether there has been any fault on any side, that I do not yet know."

"I can assure you, Dr. Thorne, that an offer was made by Frank; such an offer cannot be without its allurements to a young lady circumstanced like your niece."

"Allurements!" almost shouted the doctor; and, as he did so, Lady Arabella stepped back a pace or two, retreating from the fire which shot out of his eyes. "But the truth is, Lady Arabella, you do not know my niece. If you will have the goodness to let me understand what it is that you desire, I will tell you whether I can comply with your wishes."

"Of course it will be very inexpedient that the young

people should be thrown together again; for the present, I mean."

"Well!"

"Frank has now gone to Courcy Castle; and he talks of going from thence to Cambridge. But he will doubtless be here, backwards and forwards; and perhaps it will be better for all parties—safer, that is, doctor—if Miss Thorne were to discontinue her visits to Greshamsbury for a while."

"Very well!" thundered out the doctor. "Her visits to Greshamsbury shall be discontinued."

"Of course, doctor, this won't change the intercourse between us; between you and the family."

"Not change it!" said he. "Do you think that I will break bread in a house from whence she has been ignominiously banished? Do you think that I can sit down in friendship with those who have spoken of her as you have now spoken? You have many daughters; what would you say if I accused one of them as you have accused her?"

"Accused, doctor! No, I don't accuse her. But prudence, you know, does sometimes require us—"

"Very well; prudence requires you to look after those who belong to you; and prudence also requires me to look after my one lamb. Good morning, Lady Arabella."

"But, doctor, you are not going to quarrel with us? You will come when we want you; eh! won't you?"

Quarrel! quarrel with Greshamsbury! Angry as he was, the doctor felt that he could ill bear to quarrel with Greshamsbury. A man past fifty cannot easily throw over the ties that have taken twenty years to form, and wrench himself away from the various close ligatures with which, in such a period, he has become bound. He could not quarrel with the squire; he could ill bear to quarrel with Frank; though he now began to conceive that Frank had used him badly, he could not do so; he could not quarrel with the children, who had almost been born into his arms; nor even with the very walls, and trees, and grassy knolls with which he was so dearly intimate. He could not

proclaim himself an enemy to Greshamsbury; and yet he felt that fealty to Mary required of him that, for the present, he should put on an enemy's guise.

"If you want me, Lady Arabella, and send for me, I will come to you; otherwise, I will, if you please, share the sentence which has been passed on Mary. I will now wish you good morning." And then, bowing low to her, he left the room and the house, and sauntered slowly away to his own home.

What was he to say to Mary? He walked very slowly down the Greshamsbury avenue, with his hands clasped behind his back, thinking over the whole matter; thinking of it, or rather trying to think of it. When a man's heart is warmly concerned in any matter, it is almost useless for him to endeavour to think of it. Instead of thinking, he gives play to his feelings, and feeds the passion by indulging it. "Allurements!" he said to himself, repeating Lady Arabella's words. "A girl circumstanced like my niece! How utterly incapable is such a woman as that to understand the mind, and heart, and soul of such a one as Mary Thorne!" And then his thoughts recurred to Frank. "It has been ill done of him; young as he is, he should have had feeling enough to have spared me this. A thoughtless word has been spoken which will now make her miserable!" And then, as he walked on, he could not divest his mind of the remembrance of what had passed between him and Sir Roger. What if, after all, Mary should become the heiress to all that money? What, if she should become, in fact, the owner of Greshamsbury? for indeed it seemed too possible that Sir Roger's heir would be the owner of Greshamsbury.

The idea was one which he disliked to entertain, but it would recur to him again and again. It might be, that a marriage between his niece and the nominal heir to the estate might be of all matches the best for young Gresham to make. How sweet would be the revenge, how glorious the retaliation on Lady Arabella, if, after what had now been said, it should come to pass that all the difficulties of

Greshamsbury should be made smooth by Mary's love, and Mary's hand! It was a dangerous subject on which to ponder; and, as he sauntered down the road, the doctor did his best to banish it from his mind, not altogether successfully.

But as he went he again encountered Beatrice. "Tell Mary I went to her to-day," said she, "and that I expect her up here to-morrow. If she does not come, I shall be savage."

"Do not be savage," said he, putting out his hand, "even though she should not come."

Beatrice immediately saw that his manner with her was not playful, and that his face was serious. "I was only in joke," said she; "of course I was only joking. But is anything the matter? Is Mary ill?"

"Oh, no; not ill at all; but she will not be here to-morrow, nor probably for some time. But, Miss Gresham, you must not be savage with her."

Beatrice tried to interrogate him, but he would not wait to answer her questions. While she was speaking he bowed to her in his usual old-fashioned courteous way, and passed on out of hearing. "She will not come up for some time," said Beatrice to herself. "Then mamma must have quarrelled with her." And at once in her heart she acquitted her friend of all blame in the matter, whatever it might be, and condemned her mother unheard.

The doctor, when he arrived at his own house, had in no wise made up his mind as to the manner in which he would break the matter to Mary; but by the time that he had reached the drawing-room, he had made up his mind to this, that he would put off the evil hour till the morrow. He would sleep on the matter—lie awake on it, more probably—and then at breakfast, as best he could, tell her what had been said of her.

Mary that evening was more than usually inclined to be playful. She had not been quite certain till the morning, whether Frank had absolutely left Greshamsbury, and had,

therefore, preferred the company of Miss Oriel to going up to the house. There was a peculiar cheerfulness about her friend Patience, a feeling of satisfaction with the world and those in it, which Mary always shared when with her; and now she had brought home to the doctor's fireside, in spite of her young troubles, a smiling face, if not a heart altogether happy.

"Uncle," she said at last, "what makes you so sombre? Shall I read to you?"

"No; not to-night, dearest."

"Why, uncle; what is the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing."

"Ah, but it is something, and you shall tell me;" and getting up she came over to his arm-chair, and leant over his shoulder.

He looked at her for a minute in silence, and then, getting up from his chair, passed his arm round her waist, and pressed her closely to his heart.

"My darling!" he said, almost convulsively. "My best, own, truest darling!" and Mary, looking up into his face, saw that the big tears were running down his cheeks.

But still he told her nothing that night.

'It had a perfect right to be called a castle'

CHAPTER XV

Courcy

WHEN Frank Gresham expressed to his father an opinion that Courcy Castle was dull, the squire, as may be remembered, did not pretend to differ from him. To men such as the squire, and such as the squire's son, Courcy Castle was dull. To what class of men it would not be dull the author is not prepared to say; but it may be presumed that the De Courcys found it to their liking, or they would have made it other than it was.

The castle itself was a huge brick pile, built in the days of William III., which, though they were grand days for the construction of the constitution, were not very grand for architecture of a more natural description. It had, no doubt, a perfect right to be called a castle, as it was entered by a castle-gate which led into a court, the porter's lodge for which was built as it were into the wall; there were attached to it also two round, stumpy adjuncts, which were, perhaps properly, called towers, though they did not do much in the way of towering; and, moreover, along one side of the house, over what would otherwise have been the cornice, there ran a castellated parapet, through the assistance of which, the imagination no doubt was intended to supply the muzzles of defiant artillery. But any artillery which would have so presented its muzzle must have been very small, and it may be doubted whether even a bowman could have obtained shelter there.

The grounds about the castle were not very inviting, nor, as grounds, very extensive; though, no doubt, the entire domain was such as suited the importance of so puissant a nobleman as Earl de Courcy. What, indeed, should have been the park was divided out into various large paddocks. The surface was flat and unbroken; and though there were magnificent elm-trees standing in

straight lines, like hedge-rows, the timber had not that beautiful, wild, scattered look which generally gives the great charm to English scenery.

The town of Courcy—for the place claimed to rank as a town—was in many particulars like the castle. It was built of dingy-red brick—almost more brown than red—and was solid, dull-looking, ugly, and comfortable. It consisted of four streets, which were formed by two roads crossing each other, making at the point of junction a centre for the town. Here stood the Red Lion; had it been called the brown lion, the nomenclature would have been more strictly correct; and here, in the old days of coaching, some life had been wont to stir itself at those hours in the day and night when the Freetraders, Tallyhoes, and Royal Mails changed their horses. But now there was a railway station a mile and a half distant, and the moving life of the town of Courcy was confined to the Red Lion omnibus, which seemed to pass its entire time in going up and down between the town and the station, quite unembarrassed by any great weight of passengers.

There were, so said the Courcyites when away from Courcy, excellent shops in the place; but they were not the less accustomed, when at home among themselves, to complain to each other of the vile extortion with which they were treated by their neighbours. The ironmonger, therefore, though he loudly asserted that he could beat Bristol in the quality of his wares in one direction, and undersell Gloucester in another, bought his tea and sugar on the sly in one of those larger towns; and the grocer, on the other hand, equally distrusted the pots and pans of home production. Trade, therefore, at Courcy, had not thriven since the railway had opened: and, indeed, had any patient inquirer stood at the cross through one entire day, counting the customers who entered the neighbouring shops, he might well have wondered that any shops in Courcy could be kept open.

And how changed has been the bustle of that once noisy

inn to the present death-like silence of its green court-yard! There, a lame ostler crawls about with his hands thrust into the capacious pockets of his jacket, feeding on memory. That weary pair of omnibus jades, and three sorry posters, are all that now grace those stables where horses used to be stalled in close contiguity by the dozen; where twenty grains a-piece, abstracted from every feed of oats consumed during the day, would have afforded a daily quart to the lucky pilferer.

Come, my friend, and discourse with me. Let us know what are thy ideas of the inestimable benefits which science has conferred on us in these, our latter days. How dost thou, among others, appreciate railways and the power of steam, telegraphs, telegrams, and our new expresses? But indifferently, you say. "Time was I've zeed vifteen pair o' osses go out of this 'ere yard in vour-and-twenty hour; and now there be'ant vifteen, no, not ten, in vour-and-twenty days! There was the duik—not this 'un; he be'ant no gude; but this 'un's vather—why, when he'd come down the road, the cattle did be a-going, vour days an eend. Here'd be the tooter and the young gen'lemen, and the governess and the young leddies, and there the servants—they'd be al'ays the grandest folk of all—and then the duik and the doochess—Lord love 'ee, zur; the money did fly in them days! But now—" and the feeling of scorn and contempt which the lame ostler was enabled by his native talent to throw into that word, "now," was quite as eloquent against the power of steam as anything that has been spoken at dinners, or written in pamphlets by the keenest admirers of latter-day lights.

"Why, luke at this 'ere town," continued he of the sieve, "the grass be a-growing in the very streets;—that can't be no gude. Why, luke 'ee here, zur; I do be a-standing at this 'ere gateway, just this way, hour arter hour, and my heyes is hopen, mostly;—I zees who's a-coming and who's a-going. Nobody's a-coming and no-body's a-going;—that can't be no gude. Luke at that there

homnibus; why, darn me—" and now, in his eloquence at this peculiar point, my friend became more loud and powerful than ever—"why, darn me, if maister harns enough with that there buss to put hiron on them there osses' feet, I'll—be—blowed!" And as he uttered this hypothetical denunciation on himself he spoke very slowly, bringing out every word as it were separately, and lowering himself at his knees at every sound, moving at the same time his right hand up and down. When he had finished, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, pointing downwards, as if there was to be the site of his doom if the curse that he had called down upon himself should ever come to pass: and then, waiting no further converse, he hobbled away melancholy to his deserted stables.

Oh, my friend! my poor lame friend, it will avail nothing to tell thee of Liverpool and Manchester; of the glories of Glasgow, with her flourishing banks; of London, with its third million of inhabitants; of the great things which commerce is doing for this nation of thine! What is commerce to thee, unless it be a commerce in posting on that worn-out, all but useless great western turnpike-road? There is nothing left for thee but to be carted away as rubbish—for thee and for many of us in these now prosperous days; oh, my melancholy, care-ridden friend!

Courcy Castle was certainly a dull place to look at, and Frank, in his former visits, had found that the appearance did not belie the reality. He had been but little there when the earl had been at Courcy; and as he had always felt from his childhood a peculiar distaste to the governance of his aunt, the countess, this perhaps may have added to his feeling of dislike. Now, however, the castle was to be fuller than he had ever before known it; the earl was to be at home; there was some talk of the Duke of Omnium coming for a day or two, though that seemed doubtful; there were some faint hopes of Lord Porlock; Mr. Moffat, intent on the coming election—and also, let us hope, on

his coming bliss—was to be one of the guests; and there also was to be the great Miss Dunstable.

Frank, however, found that those grandees were not expected quite immediately. "I might go back to Greshamsbury for three or four days as she is not to be here," he said naïvely to his aunt, expressing, with tolerable perspicuity, his feeling, that he regarded his visit to Courcy Castle quite as a matter of business. But the countess would hear of no such arrangement. Now that she had got him, she was not going to let him fall back into the perils of Miss Thorne's intrigues, or even of Miss Thorne's propriety. "It is quite essential," she said, "that you should be here a few days before her, so that she may see that you are at home." Frank did not understand the reasoning; but he felt himself unable to rebel, and he therefore remained there, comforting himself, as best he might, with the eloquence of the Honourable George, and the sporting humours of the Honourable John.

Mr. Moffat's was the earliest arrival of any importance. Frank had not hitherto made the acquaintance of his future brother-in-law, and there was, therefore, some little interest in the first interview. Mr. Moffat was shown into the drawing-room before the ladies had gone up to dress, and it so happened that Frank was there also. As no one else was in the room but his sister and two of his cousins, he had expected to see the lovers rush into each other's arms. But Mr. Moffat restrained his ardour, and Miss Gresham seemed contented that he should do so.

He was a nice, dapper man, rather above the middle height, and good looking enough had he had a little more expression in his face. He had dark hair, very nicely brushed, small black whiskers, and a small black mustache. His boots were excellently-well made, and his hands were very white. He simpered gently as he took hold of Augusta's fingers, and expressed a hope that she had been quite well since last he had had the pleasure of seeing her.

Then he touched the hands of the Lady Rosina and the Lady Margaretta.

"Mr. Moffat, allow me to introduce you to my brother?"

"Most happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Moffat, again putting out his hand, and allowing it to slip through Frank's grasp, as he spoke in a pretty, mincing voice: "Lady Arabella quite well?—and your father, and sisters? Very warm, isn't it?—quite hot in town, I do assure you."

"I hope Augusta likes him," said Frank to himself, arguing on the subject exactly as his father had done; "but for an engaged lover he seems to me to have a very queer way with him." Frank, poor fellow, who was of a coarser mould, would, under such circumstances have been all for kissing—sometimes, indeed, even under other circumstances.

Mr. Moffat did not do much towards improving the conviviality of the castle. He was, of course, a good deal intent upon his coming election, and spent much of his time with Mr. Nearthewinde, the celebrated parliamentary agent. It behoved him to be a good deal at Barchester, canvassing the electors and undermining, by Mr. Nearthewinde's aid, the mines for blowing him out of his seat, which were daily being contrived by Mr. Closerstil, on behalf of Sir Roger. The battle was to be fought on the internecine principle; no quarter being given or taken on either side, and of course this gave Mr. Moffat as much as he knew how to do.

Mr. Closerstil was well known to be the sharpest man at his business in all England, unless the palm should be given to his great rival, Mr. Nearthewinde; and in this instance he was to be assisted in the battle by a very clever young barrister, Mr. Romer, who was an admirer of Sir Roger's career in life. Some people in Barchester, when they saw Sir Roger, Closerstil, and Mr. Romer saunter down the high street, arm in arm, declared that it was all up with poor Moffat; but others, in whose head the bump of veneration was strongly pronounced, whispered to each

other that great shibboleth—the name of the Duke of Omnium—and mildly asserted it to be impossible that the duke's nominee should be thrown out.

Our poor friend the squire did not take much interest in the matter, except in so far that he liked his son-in-law to be in parliament. Both the candidates were in his eye equally wrong in their opinions. He had long since recanted those errors of his early youth, which had cost him his seat for the county, and had abjured the De Courcy politics. He was staunch enough as a Tory now that his being so would no longer be of the slightest use to him; but the Duke of Omnium, and Lord de Courcy, and Mr. Moffat were all Whigs; Whigs, however, differing altogether in politics from Sir Roger, who belonged to the Manchester school, and whose pretensions, through some of those inscrutable twists in modern politics which are quite unintelligible to the minds of ordinary men outside the circle, were on this occasion secretly favoured by the high Conservative party.

How Mr. Moffat, who had been brought into the political world by Lord de Courcy, obtained all the weight of the duke's interest I never could exactly learn. For the duke and the earl did not generally act as twin-brothers on such occasions.

There is a great difference in Whigs. Lord de Courcy was a court Whig, following the fortunes and enjoying, when he could get it, the sunshine of the throne. He was a sojourner at Windsor, and a visitor at Balmoral. He delighted in gold sticks, and was never so happy as when holding some cap of maintenance or spur of precedence with due dignity and acknowledged grace in the presence of all the court. His means had been somewhat embarrassed by early extravagance; and, therefore, as it was to his taste to shine, it suited him to shine at the cost of the court rather than at his own.

The Duke of Omnium was a Whig of great and different calibre. He rarely went near the presence of majesty, and

when he did do so, he did it merely as a disagreeable duty incident to his position. He was very willing that the Queen should be queen so long as he was allowed to be Duke of Omnium. Nor had he begrudged Prince Albert any of his honours till he was called Prince Consort. Then, indeed, he had, to his own intimate friends, made some remark in three words not flattering to the discretion of the prime minister. The Queen might be queen so long as he was Duke of Omnium. Their revenues were about the same, with the exception, that the duke's were his own, and he could do what he liked with them. This remembrance did not unfrequently present itself to the duke's mind. In person, he was a plain, thin man, tall, but undistinguished in appearance, except that there was a gleam of pride in his eye which seemed every moment to be saying, "I am the Duke of Omnium." He was unmarried, and, if report said true, a great debauchee; but if so he had always kept his debaucheries decently away from the eyes of the world, and was not therefore open to that loud condemnation which should fall like a hail-storm round the ears of some more open sinners.

Why these two mighty nobles put their heads together in order that the tailor's son should represent Barchester in parliament, I cannot explain. Mr. Moffat was, as has been said, Lord de Courcy's friend; and it may be that Lord de Courcy was able to repay the duke for his kindness, as touching Barchester, with some little assistance in the county representation.

The next arrival was that of the Bishop of Barchester; a meek, good, worthy man, much attached to his wife, and somewhat addicted to his ease. She, apparently, was made in a different mould, and by her energy and diligence atoned for any want in those qualities which might be observed in the bishop himself. When asked his opinion, his lordship would generally reply by saying—"Mrs. Proudie and I think so and so." But before that opinion was given, Mrs. Proudie would take up the tale, and she,

in her more concise manner, was not wont to quote the bishop as having at all assisted in the consideration of the subject. It was well known in Barsetshire that no married pair consorted more closely or more tenderly together; and the example of such conjugal affection among persons in the upper classes is worth mentioning, as it is believed by those below them, and too often with truth, that the sweet bliss of connubial reciprocity is not so common as it should be among the magnates of the earth.

But the arrival even of the bishop and his wife did not make the place cheerful to Frank Gresham, and he began to long for Miss Dunstable, in order that he might have something to do. He could not get on at all with Mr. Moffat. He had expected that the man would at once have called him Frank, and that he would have called the man Gustavus; but they did not even get beyond Mr. Moffat and Mr. Gresham. "Very hot in Barchester to-day, very," was the nearest approach to conversation which Frank could attain with him; and as far as he, Frank, could see, Augusta never got much beyond it. There might be *tête-à-tête* meetings between them, but, if so, Frank could not detect when they took place; and so, opening his heart at last to the Honourable George, for the want of a better confidant, he expressed his opinion that his future brother-in-law was a muff.

"A muff—I believe you too. What do you think now? I have been with him and Nearthewinde in Barchester these three days past, looking up the electors' wives and daughters, and that kind of thing."

"I say, if there is any fun in it you might as well take me with you."

"Oh, there is not much fun; they are mostly so slobbered and dirty. A sharp fellow is Nearthewinde, and knows what he is about well."

"Does he look up the wives and daughters too?"

"Oh, he goes on every tack, just as it's wanted. But there was Moffat, yesterday, in a room behind the milliner's shop

near Cuthbert's gate; I was with him. The woman's husband is one of the choristers, and an elector, you know, and Moffat went to look for his vote. Now, there was no one there when we got there but the three young women, the wife that is, and her two girls—very pretty women they are too."

"I say, George, I'll go and get that chorister's vote for Moffat; I ought to do it as he's to be my brother-in-law."

"But what do you think Moffat said to the women?"

"Can't guess—he didn't kiss any of them, did he?"

"Kiss any of them! No; but he begged to give them his positive assurance as a gentleman, that if he was returned to parliament he would vote for an extension of the franchise, and the admission of the Jews into parliament."

"Well, he is a muff!" said Frank.

CHAPTER XVI

Miss Dunstable

AT last the great Miss Dunstable came. Frank, when he heard that the heiress had arrived, felt some slight palpitation at his heart. He had not the remotest idea in the world of marrying her; indeed, during the last week past, absence had so heightened his love for Mary Thorne that he was more than ever resolved that he would never marry any one but her. He knew that he had made her a formal offer of his hand, and that it behoved him to keep to it, let the charms of Miss Dunstable be what they might: but, nevertheless, he was prepared to go through a certain amount of courtship, in obedience to his aunt's behests, and he felt a little nervous at being brought up in that way, face to face, to do battle with two hundred thousand pounds.

"Miss Dunstable has arrived," said his aunt to him, with

great complacency, on his return from an electioneering visit to the beauties of Barchester, which he made with his cousin George on the day after the conversation which was repeated at the end of the last chapter. "She has arrived, and is looking remarkably well; she has quite a *distingué* air, and will grace any circle to which she may be introduced. I will introduce you before dinner, and you can take her out."

"I couldn't propose to her to-night, I suppose?" said Frank, maliciously.

"Don't talk nonsense, Frank," said the countess, angrily. "I am doing what I can for you, and taking an infinity of trouble to endeavour to place you in an independent position, and now you talk nonsense to me."

Frank muttered some sort of an apology, and then went to prepare himself for the encounter.

Miss Dunstable, though she had come by the train, had brought with her her own carriage, her own horses, her own coachman and footman, and her own maid, of course. She had also brought with her half a score of trunks, full of wearing apparel; some of them nearly as rich as that wonderful box which was stolen the other day from the top of a cab. But she brought all these things, not in the least because she wanted them herself, but because she had been instructed to do so.

Frank was a little more than ordinarily careful in dressing. He spoilt a couple of white neckties before he was satisfied, and was rather fastidious as to the set of his hair. There was not much of the dandy about him in the ordinary meaning of the word; but he felt that it was incumbent on him to look his best, seeing what it was expected that he should now do. He certainly did not mean to marry Miss Dunstable; but as he was to have a flirtation with her, it was as well that he should do so under the best-possible auspices.

When he entered the drawing-room he perceived at once that the lady was there. She was seated between the

countess and Mrs. Proudie; and Mammon, in her person, was receiving worship from the temporalities and spiritualities of the land. He tried to look unconcerned, and remained in the further part of the room, talking with some of his cousins; but he could not keep his eye off the future, possible Mrs. Frank Gresham; and it seemed as though she was as much constrained to scrutinize him as he felt to scrutinize her.

Lady de Courcy had declared that she was looking extremely well, and had particularly alluded to her *distingué* appearance. Frank at once felt that he could not altogether go along with his aunt in this opinion. Miss Dunstable might be very well; but her style of beauty was one which did not quite meet with his warmest admiration.

In age she was about thirty; but Frank, who was no great judge in such matters, and who was accustomed to have very young girls round him, at once put her down as being ten years older. She had a very high colour, very red cheeks, a large mouth, big white teeth, a broad nose, and bright, small, black eyes. Her hair also was black and bright, but very crisp and strong, and was combed close round her face in small crisp black ringlets. Since she had been brought out into the fashionable world some one of her instructors in fashion had given her to understand that curls were not the thing. "They'll always pass muster," Miss Dunstable had replied, "when they are done up with bank-notes." It may therefore be presumed that Miss Dunstable had a will of her own.

"Frank," said the countess, in the most natural and unpremeditated way, as soon as she caught her nephew's eye, "come here. I want to introduce you to Miss Dunstable." The introduction was then made. "Mrs. Proudie, would you excuse me? I must positively go and say a few words to Mrs. Barlow, or the poor woman will feel herself huffed;" and, so saying, she moved off, leaving the coast clear for Master Frank.

He of course slipped into his aunt's place, and expressed

a hope that Miss Dunstable was not fatigued by her journey."

"Fatigued!" said she, in a voice rather loud, but very good-humoured, and not altogether unpleasing; "I am not to be fatigued by such a thing as that. Why, in May we came through all the way from Rome to Paris without sleeping—that is, without sleeping in a bed—and we were upset three times out of the sledges coming over the Simplon. It was such fun! Why, I wasn't to say tired even then."

"All the way from Rome to Paris!" said Mrs. Proudie—in a tone of astonishment, meant to flatter the heiress—"and what made you in such a hurry?"

"Something about money matters," said Miss Dunstable, speaking rather louder than usual. "Something to do with the ointment. I was selling the business just then."

Mrs. Proudie bowed, and immediately changed the conversation. "Idolatry is, I believe, more rampant than ever in Rome," said she; "and I fear there is no such thing at all as Sabbath observances."

"Oh, not the least," said Miss Dunstable, with rather a joyous air; "Sundays and week-days are all the same there."

"How very frightful!" said Mrs. Proudie.

"But it's a delicious place. I do like Rome, I must say. And as for the Pope, if he wasn't quite so fat he would be the nicest old fellow in the world. Have you been in Rome, Mrs. Proudie?"

Mrs. Proudie sighed as she replied in the negative, and declared her belief that danger was to be apprehended from such visits.

"Oh!—ah!—the malaria—of course—yes; if you go at the wrong time; but nobody is such a fool as that now."

"I was thinking of the soul, Miss Dunstable," said the lady-bishop, in her peculiar grave tone. "A place where there are no Sabbath observances—"

"And have you been at Rome, Mr. Gresham?" said the young lady, turning almost abruptly round to Frank,

and giving a somewhat uncivilly cold shoulder to Mrs. Proudie's exhortation. She, poor lady, was forced to finish her speech to the Honourable George, who was standing near to her. He, having an idea that bishops and all their belongings, like other things appertaining to religion, should, if possible, be avoided; but if that were not possible, should be treated with much assumed gravity, immediately put on a long face, and remarked that—"it was a deuced shame: for his part he always liked to see people go quiet on Sundays. The parsons had only one day out of seven, and he thought they were fully entitled to that." Satisfied with which, or not satisfied, Mrs. Proudie had to remain silent till dinner-time.

"No," said Frank; "I never was in Rome. I was in Paris once, and that's all." And then, feeling a not unnatural anxiety as to the present state of Miss Dunstable's worldly concerns, he took an opportunity of falling back on that part of the conversation which Mrs. Proudie had exercised so much tact in avoiding.

"And was it sold?" said he.

"Sold! what sold?"

"You were saying about the business—that you came back without going to bed because of selling the business."

"Oh!—the ointment. No; it was not sold. After all, the affair did not come off, and I might have remained and had another roll in the snow. Wasn't it a pity?"

"So," said Frank to himself, "if I should do it, I should be owner of the ointment of Lebanon: how odd!" And then he gave her his arm and handed her down to dinner.

He certainly found that the dinner was less dull than any other he had sat down to at Courcy Castle. He did not fancy that he should ever fall in love with Miss Dunstable; but she certainly was an amiable companion. She told him of her tour, and the fun she had in her journeys; how she took a physician with her for the benefit of her health, whom she generally was forced to nurse; of the trouble it was to her to look after and wait upon her numerous

servants; of the tricks she played to bamboozle people who came to stare at her; and, lastly, she told him of a lover who followed her from country to country, and was now in hot pursuit of her, having arrived in London the evening before she left.

"A lover!" said Frank, somewhat startled by the suddenness of the confidence.

"A lover—yes—Mr. Gresham; why should I not have a lover?"

"Oh!—no—of course not. I dare say you have a good many."

"Only three or four, upon my word; that is, only three or four that I favour. One is not bound to reckon the others, you know."

"No, they'd be too numerous. And so you have three whom you favour, Miss Dunstable;" and Frank sighed, as though he intended to say that the number was too many for his peace of mind.

"Is not that quite enough? But of course I change them sometimes;" and she smiled on him very good-naturedly. "It would be very dull if I was always to keep the same."

"Very dull, indeed," said Frank, who did not quite know what to say.

"Do you think the countess would mind my having one or two of them here if I was to ask her?"

"I am quite sure she would," said Frank, very briskly. "She would not approve of it at all; nor should I."

"You—why, what have you to do with it?"

"A great deal—so much so that I positively forbid it; but Miss Dunstable."

"Well, Mr. Gresham."

"We will contrive to make up for the deficiency as well as possible, if you will permit us to do so. Now for myself—"

"Well, for yourself."

At this moment the countess gleamed her accomplished

eye round the table, and Miss Dunstable rose from her chair as Frank was preparing his attack, and accompanied the other ladies into the drawing-room.

His aunt, as she passed him, touched his arm lightly with her fan, so lightly that the action was perceived by no one else. But Frank well understood the meaning of the touch, and appreciated the approbation which it conveyed. He merely blushed however at his own dissimulation; for he felt more certain than ever that he would never marry Miss Dunstable, and he felt nearly equally sure that Miss Dunstable would never marry him.

Lord de Courcy was now at home; but his presence did not add much hilarity to the claret-cup. The young men, however, were very keen about the election, and Mr. Nearthewinde, who was one of the party, was full of the most sanguine hopes.

"I have done one good at any rate," said Frank; "I have secured the chorister's vote."

"What! Bagley?" said Nearthewinde. "The fellow kept out of my way, and I couldn't see him."

"I haven't exactly seen him," said Frank; "but I've got his vote all the same."

"What! by a letter?" said Mr. Moffat.

"No, not by a letter," said Frank, speaking rather low as he looked at the bishop and the earl; "I got a promise from his wife: I think he's a little in the henpecked line."

"Ha—ha—ha!" laughed the good bishop, who, in spite of Frank's modulation of his voice, had overheard what had passed. "Is that the way you manage electioneering matters in our cathedral city? Ha—ha—ha!" The idea of one of his choristers being in the henpecked line was very amusing to the bishop.

"Oh, I got a distinct promise," said Frank in his pride; and then added incautiously, "but I had to order bonnets for the whole family."

"Hush-h-h-h-h!" said Mr. Nearthewinde, absolutely flabbergasted by such imprudence on the part of one of his

client's friends. "I am quite sure that your order had no effect, and was intended to have no effect on Mr. Bagley's vote."

"Is that wrong?" said Frank; "upon my word I thought that it was quite legitimate."

"One should never admit anything in electioneering matters, should one?" said George, turning to Mr. Nearthewinde.

"Very little, Mr. de Courcy; very little indeed—the less the better. It's hard to say in these days what is wrong and what is not. Now, there's Reddypalm, the publican, the man who has the Brown Bear. Well, I was there of course: he's a voter, and if any man in Barchester ought to feel himself bound to vote for a friend of the duke's, he ought. Now, I was so thirsty when I was in that man's house that I was dying for a glass of beer; but for the life of me I didn't dare order one."

"Why not?" said Frank, whose mind was only just beginning to be enlightened by the great doctrine of purity of election as practised in English provincial towns.

"Oh, Closerstil had some fellow looking at me; why, I can't walk down that town without having my very steps counted. I like sharp fighting myself, but I never go so sharp as that."

"Nevertheless, I got Bagley's vote," said Frank, persisting in praise of his own electioneering prowess; "and you may be sure of this, Mr. Nearthewinde, none of Closerstil's men were looking at me when I got it."

"Who'll pay for the bonnets, Frank?" said George, whispering to him.

"Oh, I'll pay for them if Moffat won't. I think I shall keep an account there; they seem to have good gloves and those sort of things."

"Very good, I have no doubt," said George.

"I suppose your lordship will be in town soon after the meeting of Parliament?" said the bishop, questioning the earl.

"Oh! yes; I suppose I must be there. I am never allowed to remain very long in quiet. It is a great nuisance; but it is too late to think of that now."

"Men in high places, my lord, never were, and never will be, allowed to consider themselves. They burn their torches not in their own behalf," said the bishop, thinking, perhaps, as much of himself as he did of his noble friend. "Rest and quiet are the comforts of those who have been content to remain in obscurity."

"Perhaps so," said the earl, finishing his glass of claret with an air of virtuous resignation. "Perhaps so." His own martyrdom, however, had not been severe, for the rest and quiet of home had never been peculiarly satisfactory to his tastes. Soon after this they all went to the ladies.

It was some little time before Frank could find an opportunity of recommencing his allotted task with Miss Dunstable. She got into conversation with the bishop and some other people, and, except that he took her tea-cup and nearly managed to squeeze one of her fingers as he did so, he made very little further progress till towards the close of the evening.

At last he found her so nearly alone as to admit of his speaking to her in his low confidential voice.

"Have you managed that matter with my aunt?" said he.

"What matter?" said Miss Dunstable; and her voice was not low, nor particularly confidential.

"About those three or four gentlemen whom you wish her to invite here."

"Oh! my attendant knights! no, indeed; you gave me such very slight hope of success; besides, you said something about my not wanting them."

"Yes, I did: I really think they'd be quite unnecessary. If you should want any one to defend you—"

"At these coming elections, for instance."

"Then, or at any other time, there are plenty here who will be ready to stand up for you."

"Plenty! I don't want plenty: one good lance in the olden days was always worth more than a score of ordinary men-at-arms."

"But you talked about three or four."

"Yes; but then you see, Mr. Gresham, I have never yet found the one good lance—at least, not good enough to suit my ideas of true prowess."

What could Frank do but declare that he was ready to lay his own in rest, now and always on her behalf? His aunt had been quite angry with him, and had thought that he turned her into ridicule when he spoke of making an offer to her guest that very evening; and yet here he was so placed that he had hardly an alternative. Let his inward resolution to abjure the heiress be ever so strong, he was now in a position which allowed him no choice in the matter. Even Mary Thorne could hardly have blamed him for saying, that so far as his own prowess went, it was quite at Miss Dunstable's service. Had Mary been looking on, she, perhaps, might have thought that he could have done so with less of that look of devotion which he threw into his eyes.

"Well, Mr. Gresham, that's very civil—very civil indeed," said Miss Dunstable. "Upon my word, if a lady wanted a true knight she might do worse than trust to you. Only I fear that your courage is of so exalted a nature that you would be ever ready to do battle for any beauty who might be in distress—or, indeed, who might not. You could never confine your valour to the protection of one maiden."

"Oh, yes! but I would though, if I liked her," said Frank. "There isn't a more constant fellow in the world than I am in that way—you try me, Miss Dunstable."

"When young ladies make such trials as that, they sometimes find it too late to go back if the trial doesn't succeed, Mr. Gresham."

"Oh, of course there's always some risk. It's like hunting; there would be no fun if there was no danger."

"But if you get a tumble one day you can retrieve your honour the next; but a poor girl, if she once trusts a man who says that he loves her, has no such chance. For myself, I would never listen to a man unless I'd known him for seven years at least."

"Seven years!" said Frank, who could not help thinking that in seven years' time Miss Dunstable would be almost an old woman "Seven days is enough to know any person."

"Or perhaps seven hours; eh, Mr. Gresham?"

"Seven hours—well, perhaps seven hours, if they happen to be a good deal together during the time."

"There's nothing after all like love at first sight, is there, Mr. Gresham?"

Frank knew well enough that she was quizzing him, and could not resist the temptation he felt to be revenged on her. "I am sure it's very pleasant," said he; "but as for myself I have never experienced it."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Miss Dunstable. "Upon my word, Mr. Gresham, I like you amazingly. I didn't expect to meet anybody down here that I should like half so much. You must come and see me in London, and I'll introduce you to my three knights," and so saying, she moved away and fell into conversation with some of the higher powers.

Frank felt himself to be rather snubbed, in spite of the strong expression which Miss Dunstable had made in his favour. It was not quite clear to him that she did not take him for a boy. He was, to be sure, avenged on her for that by taking her for a middle-aged woman; but, nevertheless, he was hardly satisfied with himself. "I might give her a heartache yet," said he to himself; "and she might find afterwards that she was left in the lurch with all her money." And so he retired, solitary, into a far part of the room, and began to think of Mary Thorne: as he did so, and as his eyes fell upon Miss Dunstable's stiff curls, he almost shuddered.

And then the ladies retired. His aunt, with a good-

natured smile on her face, came to him as she was leaving the room, the last of the bevy, and, putting her hand on his arm, led him out into a small unoccupied chamber which opened from the grand saloon.

"Upon my word, Master Frank," said she, "you seem to be losing no time with the heiress. You have quite made an impression already."

"I don't know much about that, aunt," said he, looking rather sheepish.

"Oh, I declare you have; but, Frank, my dear boy, you should not precipitate these sort of things too much. It is well to take a little more time: it is more valued; and perhaps, you know, on the whole—"

Perhaps Frank might know; but it was clear that Lady de Courcy did not; at any rate, she did not know how to express herself. Had she said out her mind plainly, she would probably have spoken thus: "I want you to make love to Miss Dunstable, certainly; or at any rate to make an offer to her; but you need not make a show of yourself and of her, too, by doing it so openly as all that." The countess, however, did not want to reprimand her obedient nephew, and therefore did not speak out her thoughts.

"Well?" said Frank, looking up into her face.

"Take a *leetle* more time—that is all, my dear boy; slow and sure, you know;" so the countess again patted his arm and went away to bed.

"Old fool!" muttered Frank to himself, as he returned to the room where the men were still standing. He was right in this: she was an old fool, or she would have seen that there was no chance whatever that her nephew and Miss Dunstable should become man and wife.

"Well, Frank," said the Honourable John; "so you're after the heiress already."

"He won't give any of us a chance," said the Honourable George. "If he goes on in that way she'll be Mrs. Gresham before a month is over. But, Frank, what will she say of your manner of looking for Barchester votes?"

"Mr. Gresham is certainly an excellent hand at canvassing," said Mr. Nearthewinde; "only perhaps a little too open in his manner of proceeding."

"I got that chorister for you, at any rate," said Frank. "And you would never have had him without me."

"I don't think half so much of the chorister's vote as that of Miss Dunstable," said the Honourable George: "that's the interest that is really worth the looking after."

"But, surely," said Mr. Moffat, "Miss Dunstable has no property in Barchester?" Poor man; his heart was so intent on his election that he had not a moment to devote to the claims of love.

CHAPTER XVII

The Election

AND now the important day of the election had arrived, and some men's hearts beat quickly enough. To be or not to be a member of the British parliament is a question of very considerable moment in a man's mind. Much is often said of the great penalties which the ambitious pay for enjoying this honour; of the tremendous expenses of elections; of the long, tedious hours of unpaid labour; of the weary days passed in the house; but, nevertheless, the prize is one very well worth the price paid for it—well worth any price that can be paid for it short of wading through dirt and dishonour.

No other great European nation has anything like it to offer to the ambition of its citizens; for in no other great country of Europe, not even in those which are free, has the popular constitution obtained, as with us, true sovereignty and power of rule. Here it is so; and when a man lays himself out to be a member of parliament, he plays the

highest game and for the highest stakes which the country affords.

To some men, born silver-spooned, a seat in parliament comes as a matter of course. From the time of their early manhood they hardly know what it is not to sit there; and the honour is hardly appreciated, being too much a matter of course. As a rule, they never know how great a thing it is to be in parliament; though, when reverses come, as reverses occasionally will come, they fully feel how dreadful it is to be left out.

But to men aspiring to be members, or to those who having been once fortunate have again to fight the battle without assurance of success, the coming election must be matter of dread concern. Oh, how delightful to hear that the long-talked-of rival has declined the contest, and that the course is clear! or to find by a short canvass that one's majority is safe, and the pleasures of crowing over an unlucky, friendless rival quite secured!

No such gratification as this filled the bosom of Mr. Moffat on the morning of the Barchester election. To him had been brought no positive assurance of success by his indefatigable agent, Mr. Nearthewinde. It was admitted on all sides that the contest would be a very close one; and Mr. Nearthewinde would not do more than assert that they ought to win unless things went very wrong with them.

Mr. Nearthewinde had other elections to attend to, and had not been remaining at Courcy Castle ever since the coming of Miss Dunstable: but he had been there, and at Barchester, as often as possible, and Mr. Moffat was made greatly uneasy by reflecting how very high the bill would be.

The two parties had outdone each other in the loudness of their assertions that each would on his side conduct the election in strict conformity to law. There was to be no bribery. Bribery! who, indeed, in these days would dare to bribe; to give absolute money for an absolute vote, and pay

for such an article in downright palpable sovereigns? No. Purity was much too rampant for that, and the means of detection too well understood. But purity was to be carried much further than this. There should be no treating; no hiring of two hundred voters to act as messengers at twenty shillings a-day in looking up some four hundred other voters; no bands were to be paid for; no carriages furnished; no ribbons supplied. British voters were to vote, if vote they would, for the love and respect they bore to their chosen candidate. If so actuated they would not vote, they might stay away; no other inducement would be offered.

So much was said loudly—very loudly—by each party; but, nevertheless, Mr. Moffat, early in these election days, began to have some misgivings about the bill. The proclaimed arrangement had been one exactly suitable to his taste; for Mr. Moffat loved his money. He was a man in whose breast the ambition of being great in the world, and of joining himself to aristocratic people, was continually at war with the great cost which such tastes occasioned. His last election had not been a cheap triumph. In one way or another money had been dragged from him for purposes which had been to his mind unintelligible; and when, about the middle of his first session, he had, with much grumbling, settled all demands, he had questioned with himself whether his whistle was worth its cost.

He was therefore a great stickler for purity of election; although, had he considered the matter, he should have known that with him money was his only passport into that elysium in which he had now lived for two years. He probably did not consider it; for when, in those canvassing days immediately preceding the election, he had seen that all the beer-houses were open, and that half the population was drunk, he had asked Mr. Nearthewinde whether this violation of the treaty was taking place only on the part of his opponent, and whether, in such case, it would not be duly noticed with a view to a possible future petition.

Mr. Nearthewinde assured him triumphantly that half at least of the wallowing swine were his own especial friends; and that somewhat more than half of the publicans of the town were eagerly engaged in fighting his, Mr. Moffat's battle. Mr. Moffat groaned, and would have expostulated had Mr. Nearthewinde been willing to hear him. But that gentleman's services had been put into requisition by Lord de Courcy rather than by the candidate. For the candidate he cared but little. To pay the bill would be enough for him. He, Mr. Nearthewinde, was doing his business as he well knew how to do it; and it was not likely that he should submit to be lectured by such as Mr. Moffat on a trumpery score of expense.

It certainly did appear on the morning of the election as though some great change had been made in that resolution of the candidates to be very pure. From an early hour rough bands of music were to be heard in every part of the usually quiet town; carts and gigs, omnibuses and flys, all the old carriages from all the inn-yards, and every vehicle of any description which could be pressed into the service were in motion; if the horses and post-boys were not to be paid for by the candidates, the voters themselves were certainly very liberal in their mode of bringing themselves to the poll. The election district of the city of Barchester extended for some miles on each side of the city, so that the omnibuses and flys had enough to do. Beer was to be had at the public-houses, almost without question, by all who chose to ask for it; and rum and brandy were dispensed to select circles within the bars with almost equal profusion. As for ribbons, the mercers' shops must have been emptied of that article, as far as scarlet and yellow were concerned. Scarlet was Sir Roger's colour, while the friends of Mr. Moffat were decked with yellow. Seeing what he did see, Mr. Moffat might well ask whether there had not been a violation of the treaty of purity!

At the time of this election there was some question whether England should go to war with all her energy; or

whether it would not be better for her to save her breath to cool her porridge, and not meddle more than could be helped with foreign quarrels. The last view of the matter was advocated by Sir Roger, and his motto of course proclaimed the merits of domestic peace and quiet. "Peace abroad and a big loaf at home," was consequently displayed on four or five huge scarlet banners, and carried waving over the heads of the people. But Mr. Moffat was a staunch supporter of the government, who were already inclined to be belligerent, and " England's honour" was therefore the legend under which he selected to do battle. It may, however, be doubted whether there was in all Barchester one inhabitant—let alone one elector—so fatuous as to suppose that England's honour was in any special manner dear to Mr. Moffat; or that he would be a whit more sure of a big loaf than he was now, should Sir Roger happily become a member of the legislature.

And then the fine arts were resorted to, seeing that language fell short in telling all that was found necessary to be told. Poor Sir Roger's failing as regards the bottle was too well known; and it was also known that, in acquiring his title, he had not quite laid aside the rough mode of speech which he had used in early years. There was, consequently, a great daub painted up on sundry walls, on which a navvy, with a pimply, bloated face, was to be seen standing on a railway bank, leaning on a spade, holding a bottle in one hand, while he invited a comrade to drink. "Come, Jack, shall us have a drop of some'at short?" were the words coming out of the navvy's mouth; and under this was painted in huge letters,

"THE LAST NEW BARONET."

But Mr. Moffat hardly escaped on easier terms. The trade by which his father had made his money was as well known as that of the railway contractor; and every possible symbol of tailordom was displayed in graphic portraiture on the walls and hoardings of the city. He was drawn with

his goose, with his scissors, with his needle, with his tapes; he might be seen measuring, cutting, stitching, pressing, carrying home his bundle, and presenting his little bill; and under each of these representations was repeated his own motto, "England's honour."

Such were the pleasant little amenities with which the people of Barchester greeted the two candidates who were desirous of the honour of serving them in parliament.

The polling went on briskly and merrily. There were somewhat above nine hundred registered voters, of whom the greater portion recorded their votes early in the day. At two o'clock, according to Sir Roger's committee, the numbers were as follows:—

Scatcherd . . .	275
Moffat . . .	268

Whereas, by the light afforded by Mr. Moffat's people, they stood in a slightly different ratio to each other, being written thus:—

Moffat. . . .	277
Scatcherd . . .	269

This naturally heightened the excitement, and gave additional delight to the proceedings. At half-past two it was agreed by both sides that Mr. Moffat was ahead; the Moffatites claiming a majority of twelve, and the Scatcherdites allowing a majority of one. But by three o'clock sundry good men and true, belonging to the railway interest, had made their way to the booth in spite of the efforts of a band of roughs from Courcy, and Sir Roger was again leading, by ten or a dozen, according to his own showing.

One little transaction which took place in the earlier part of the day deserves to be recorded. There was in Barchester an honest publican—honest as the world of publicans goes—who not only was possessed of a vote, but possessed also of a son who was a voter. He was one Reddypalm, and in former days, before he had learned to

appreciate the full value of an Englishman's franchise, he had been a declared liberal and an early friend of Roger Scatcherd's. In latter days he had governed his political feelings with more decorum, and had not allowed himself to be carried away by such foolish fervour as he had evinced in his youth. On this special occasion, however, his line of conduct was so mysterious as for a while to baffle even those who knew him best.

His house was apparently open in Sir Roger's interest. Beer, at any rate, was flowing there as elsewhere; and scarlet ribbons going in—not, perhaps, in a state of perfect steadiness—came out more unsteady than before. Still had Mr. Reddypalm been deaf to the voice of that charmer, Closerstil, though he had charmed with all his wisdom. Mr. Reddypalm had stated, first his unwillingness to vote at all:—he had, he said, given over politics, and was not inclined to trouble his mind again with the subject; then he had spoken of his great devotion to the Duke of Omnium, under whose grandfathers his grandfather had been bred: Mr. Nearthewinde had, as he said, been with him, and proved to him beyond a shadow of a doubt that it would show the deepest ingratitude on his part to vote against the duke's candidate.

Mr. Closerstil thought he understood all this, and sent more, and still more men to drink beer. He even caused—taking infinite trouble to secure secrecy in the matter—three gallons of British brandy to be ordered and paid for as the best French. But, nevertheless, Mr. Reddypalm made no sign to show that he considered that the right thing had been done. On the evening before the election he told one of Mr. Closerstil's confidential men, that he had thought a good deal about it, and that he believed he should be constrained by his conscience to vote for Mr. Moffat.

We have said that Mr. Closerstil was accompanied by a learned friend of his, one Mr. Romer, a barrister, who was greatly interested for Sir Roger, and who, being a strong liberal, was assisting in the canvass with much energy. He,

hearing how matters were likely to go with this conscientious publican, and feeling himself peculiarly capable of dealing with such delicate scruples, undertook to look into the case in hand. Early, therefore, on the morning of the election, he sauntered down the cross-street in which hung out the sign of the Brown Bear, and, as he expected, found Mr. Reddypalm near his own door.

Now it was quite an understood thing that there was to be no bribery. This was understood by no one better than by Mr. Romer, who had, in truth, drawn up many of the published assurances to that effect. And, to give him his due, he was fully minded to act in accordance with these assurances. The object of all the parties was to make it worth the voters' while to give their votes; but to do so without bribery. Mr. Romer had repeatedly declared that he would have nothing to do with any illegal practising; but he had also declared that, as long as all was done according to law, he was ready to lend his best efforts to assist Sir Roger. How he assisted Sir Roger, and adhered to the law, will now be seen.

Oh, Mr. Romer! Mr. Romer! is it not the case with thee that thou "would'st not play false and yet would wrongly win?" Not in electioneering, Mr. Romer, any more than in other pursuits can a man touch pitch and not be defiled; as thou, innocent as thou art, wilt soon learn to thy terrible cost.

"Well, Reddypalm," said Mr. Romer, shaking hands with him. Mr. Romer had not been equally cautious as Nearthewinde, and had already drunk sundry glasses of ale at the Brown Bear, in the hope of softening the stern Bear-warden. "How is it to be to-day? Which is to be the man?"

"If any one knows that, Mr. Romer, you must be the man. A poor numskull like me knows nothing of them matters. How should I? All I looks to, Mr. Romer, is selling a trifle of drink now and then—selling it, and getting paid for it, you know, Mr. Romer."

"Yes, that's important, no doubt. But come, Reddy-

palm, such an old friend of Sir Roger as you are, a man he speaks of as one of his intimate friends, I wonder how you can hesitate about it. Now with another man, I should think that he wanted to be paid for voting—"

"Oh, Mr. Romer!—fie—fie—fie!"

"I know it's not the case with you. It would be an insult to offer you money, even if money was going. I should not mention this, only as money is not going, neither on our side nor on the other, no harm can be done."

"Mr. Romer, if you speak of such a thing you'll hurt me. I know the value of an Englishman's franchise too well to wish to sell it. I would not demean myself so low; no, not though five-and-twenty pound a vote was going, as there was in the good old times—and that's not so long ago neither."

"I am sure you wouldn't, Reddypalm; I'm sure you wouldn't. But an honest man like you should stick to old friends. Now, tell me," and putting his arm through Reddypalm's he walked with him into the passage of his own house; "Now, tell me—is there anything wrong? It's between friends, you know. Is there anything wrong?"

"I wouldn't sell my vote for untold gold," said Reddypalm, who was perhaps aware that untold gold would hardly be offered to him for it.

"I am sure you would not," said Mr. Romer.

"But," said Reddypalm, "a man likes to be paid his little bill."

"Surely, surely," said the barrister.

"And I did say two years since, when your friend Mr. Closerstil brought a friend of his down to stand here—it wasn't Sir Roger then—but when he brought a friend of his down, and when I drew two or three hogsheads of ale on their side, and when my bill was questioned and only half-settled, I did say that I wouldn't interfere with no election no more. And no more I will, Mr. Romer,—unless it be to give a quiet vote for the nobleman under whom I and mine always lived respectable."

"Oh!" said Mr. Romer.

"A man do like to have his bill paid, you know, Mr. Romer."

Mr. Romer could not but acknowledge that this was a natural feeling on the part of an ordinary mortal publican.

"It goes agin the grain with a man not to have his little bill paid, and specially at election time," again urged Mr. Reddypalm.

Mr. Romer had not much time to think about it; but he knew well that matters were so nearly balanced, that the votes of Mr. Reddypalm and his son were of inestimable value.

"If it's only about your bill," said Mr. Romer, "I'll see to have that settled. I'll speak to Closerstil about that."

"All right!" said Reddypalm, seizing the young barrister's hand and shaking it warmly; "all right!" And late in the afternoon, when a vote or two became matter of intense interest, Mr. Reddypalm and his son came up to the hustings and boldly tendered theirs for their old friend, Sir Roger.

There was a great deal of eloquence heard in Barchester on that day. Sir Roger had by this time so far recovered as to be able to go through the dreadfully hard work of canvassing and addressing the electors from eight in the morning till near sunset. A very perfect recovery, most men will say! Yes; a perfect recovery as regarded the temporary use of his faculties, both physical and mental; though it may be doubted whether there can be any permanent recovery from such disease as his. What amount of brandy he consumed to enable him to perform this election work, and what lurking evil effect the excitement might have on him—of these matters no record was kept in the history of those proceedings.

Sir Roger's eloquence was of a rough kind; but not perhaps the less operative on those for whom it was intended. The aristocracy of Barchester consisted chiefly

of clerical dignitaries, bishops, deans, prebendaries, and such like; on them and theirs it was not probable that anything said by Sir Roger would have much effect. Those men would either abstain from voting, or vote for the railway hero, with the view of keeping out the De Courcy candidate. Then came the shopkeepers, who might also be regarded as a stiff-necked generation, impervious to electioneering eloquence. They would, generally, support Mr. Moffat. But there was an inferior class of voters, ten-pound freeholders, and such like; who, at this period, were somewhat given to have an opinion of their own, and over them it was supposed that Sir Roger did obtain some power by his gift of talking.

"Now, gentlemen, will you tell me this," said he, bawling at the top of his voice from off the portico which graced the door of the Dragon of Wantley, at which celebrated inn Sir Roger's committee sat. "Who is Mr. Moffat, and what has he done for us? There have been some picture-makers about the town this week past. The Lord knows who they are; I don't. These clever fellows do tell you who I am, and what I've done. I ain't very proud of the way they've painted me, though there's something about it I ain't ashamed of either. See here," and he held up on one side of him one of the great daubs of himself—"just hold it there till I can explain it," and he handed the paper to one of his friends. "That's me," said Sir Roger, putting up his stick, and pointing to the pimply-nosed representation of himself.

"Hurrah! Hur-r-r-rah! more power to you—we all know who you are, Roger. You 're the boy! When did you get drunk last?" Such-like greetings, together with a dead cat which was flung at him from the crowd, and which he dexterously parried with his stick, were the answers which he received to this exordium.

"Yes," said he, quite undismayed by this little missile which had so nearly reached him; "that's me. And look here; this brown, dirty-looking broad streak here is

intended for a railway; and that thing in my hand—not the right hand; I'll come to that presently—"

"How about the brandy, Roger?"

"I'll come to that presently. I'll tell you about the brandy in good time. But that thing in my left hand is a spade. Now, I never handled a spade, and never could; but, boys, I handled a chisel and mallet; and many a hundred block of stone has come out smooth from under that hand;" and Sir Roger lifted up his great broad palm wide open.

"So you did, Roger, and well we minds it."

"The meaning, however, of that spade is to show that I made that railway. Now I'm very much obliged to those gentlemen over at the White Horse for putting up this picture of me. It's a true picture, and it tells you who I am. I did make that railway. I have made thousands of miles of railway; I am making thousands of miles of railways—some in Europe, some in Asia, some in America. It's a true picture," and he poked his stick through it and held it up to the crowd. "A true picture: but for that spade and that railway, I shouldn't be now here asking your votes; and, when next February comes, I shouldn't be sitting in Westminster to represent you, as, by God's grace, I certainly will do. That tells you who I am. But now, will you tell me who Mr. Moffat is?"

"How about the brandy, Roger?"

"Oh, yes, the brandy! I was forgetting that and the little speech that is coming out of my mouth—a deal, a shorter speech, and a better one than what I am making now. Here, in the right hand you see is a brandy bottle. Well, boys, I'm not a bit ashamed of that; as long as a man does his work—and the spade shows that—it's only fair he should have something to comfort him. I'm always able to work, and few men work much harder. I'm always able to work, and no man has a right to expect more of me. I never expect more than that from those who work with me."

"No more you don't, Roger: a little drop's very good, ain't it, Roger? Keeps the cold from the stomach, eh, Roger?"

"Then as to this speech, 'Come, Jack, let's have a drop of some'at short.' Why, that's a good speech, too. When I do drink I like to share with a friend; and I don't care how humble that friend is."

"Hurrah! more power. That's true too, Roger; may you never be without a drop to wet your whistle."

"They say I'm the last new baronet. Well, I ain't ashamed of that; not a bit. When will Mr. Moffat get himself made a baronet? No man can truly say I'm too proud of it. I have never stuck myself up; no, nor stuck my wife up either: but I don't see much to be ashamed of because the bigwigs chose to make a baronet of me."

"Nor, no more thee h'ant, Roger. We'd all be barrownites if so be we knew the way."

"But now, having polished off this bit of a picture, let me ask you who Mr. Moffat is? There are pictures enough about him, too; though Heaven knows where they all come from. I think Sir Edwin Landseer must have done this one of the goose; it is so deadly natural. Look at it; there he is. Upon my word, whoever did that ought to make his fortune at some of these exhibitions. Here he is again with a big pair of scissors. He calls himself 'England's honour;' what the deuce England's honour has to do with tailoring, I can't tell you: perhaps Mr. Moffat can. But mind you, my friends, I don't say anything against tailoring: some of you are tailors, I dare say."

"Yes, we be," said a little squeaking voice from out of the crowd.

"And a good trade it is. When I first knew Barchester there were tailors here who could lick any stone-mason in the trade; I say nothing against tailors. But it isn't enough for a man to be a tailor unless he's something else along with it. You're not so fond of tailors that you'll send one up to parliament merely because he is a tailor."

"We won't have no tailors. No; nor yet no cabbaging. Take a go of brandy, Roger; you're blown."

"No, I'm not blown yet. I've a deal more to say about Mr. Moffat before I shall be blown. What has he done to entitle him to come here before you and ask you to send him to parliament? Why; he isn't even a tailor. I wish he were: there's always some good in a fellow who knows how to earn his own bread. But he isn't a tailor; he can't even put a stitch in towards mending England's honour. His father was a tailor; not a Barchester tailor mind you, so as to give him any claim on your affections; but a London tailor. Now the question is, do you want to send the son of a London tailor up to parliament to represent you?"

"No, we don't; nor yet we won't, neither."

"I rather think not. You've had him once, and what has he done for you? Has he said much for you in the House of Commons? Why, he's so dumb a dog that he can't bark even for a bone. I'm told it's quite painful to hear him fumbling and mumbling and trying to get up a speech there over at the White Horse. He doesn't belong to the city; he hasn't done anything for the city; and he hasn't the power to do anything for the city. Then, why on earth does he come here? I'll tell you. The Earl de Courcy brings him. He's going to marry the Earl de Courcy's niece; for they say he's very rich—this tailor's son—only they do say also that he doesn't much like to spend his money. He's going to marry Lord de Courcy's niece, and Lord de Courcy wishes that his nephew should be in parliament. There, that's the claim which Mr. Moffat has here on the people of Barchester. He's Lord de Courcy's nominee, and those who feel themselves bound hand and foot, heart and soul, to Lord de Courcy, had better vote for him. Such men have my leave. If there are enough of such in Barchester to send him to parliament, the city in which I was born must be very much altered since I was a young man."

And so finishing his speech, Sir Roger retired within, and recruited himself in the usual manner.

Such was the flood of eloquence at the Dragon of Wantley. At the White Horse, meanwhile, the friends of the De Courcy interest were treated perhaps to sounder political views; though not expressed in periods so intelligibly fluent as those of Sir Roger.

Mr. Moffat was a young man, and there was no knowing to what proficiency in the parliamentary gift of public talking he might yet attain; but hitherto his proficiency was not great. He had, however, endeavoured to make up by study for any want of readiness of speech, and had come to Barchester daily, for the last four days, fortified with a very pretty harangue, which he had prepared for himself in the solitude of his chamber. On the three previous days matters had been allowed to progress with tolerable smoothness, and he had been permitted to deliver himself of his elaborate eloquence with few other interruptions than those occasioned by his own want of practice. But on this, the day of days, the Barchesterian roughs were not so complaisant. It appeared to Mr. Moffat, when he essayed to speak, that he was surrounded by enemies rather than friends; and in his heart he gave great blame to Mr. Nearthewinde for not managing matters better for him.

"Men of Barchester," he began, in a voice which was every now and then preternaturally loud, but which, at each fourth or fifth word, gave way from want of power, and descended to its natural weak tone. "Men of Barchester—electors and non-electors—"

"We is hall electors; hall on us, my young kiddy."

"Electors and non-electors, I now ask your suffrages, not for the first time—"

"Oh! we've tried you. We know what you're made on. Go on, Snip; don't you let 'em put you down."

"I've had the honour of representing you in parliament for the last two years, and—"

"And a deuced deal you did for us, didn't you?"

"What could you expect from the ninth part of a man? Never mind, Snip—go on; don't you be put out by any of

them. Stick to your wax and thread like a man—like the ninth part of a man—go on a little faster, Snip."

"For the last two years—and—and—" Here Mr. Moffat looked round to his friends for some little support, and the Honourable George, who stood close behind him, suggested that he had gone through it like a brick.

"And—and I went through it like a brick," said Mr. Moffat, with the gravest possible face, taking up, in his utter confusion, the words that were put into his mouth.

"Hurray!—so you did—you're the real brick. Well done, Snip; go it again with the wax and thread!"

"I am a thorough-paced reformer," continued Mr. Moffat, somewhat reassured by the effect of the opportune words which his friend had whispered into his ear. "A thorough-pacedreformer—athorough-pacedreformer—"

"Go on Snip. We all know what that means."

"A thorough-paced reformer—"

"Never mind your paces, man; but get on. Tell us something new. We're all reformers, we are."

Poor Mr. Moffat was a little thrown aback. It wasn't so easy to tell these gentlemen anything new, harassed as he was at this moment; so he looked back at his honourable supporter for some further hint. "Say something about their daughters," whispered George, whose own flights of oratory were always on that subject. Had he counselled Mr. Moffat to say a word or two about the tides, his advice would not have been less to the purpose.

"Gentlemen," he began again—"you all know that I am a thorough-paced reformer—"

"Oh! drat your reform. He's a dumb dog. Go back to your goose, Snippy; you never were made for this work. Go to Courcy Castle and reform that."

Mr. Moffat, grieved in his soul, was becoming inextricably bewildered by such facetiæ as these, when an egg—and it may be feared not a fresh egg—flung with unerring precision, struck him on the open part of his well-plaited shirt, and reduced him to speechless despair.

An egg is a means of delightful support when properly administered; but it is not calculated to add much spirit to a man's eloquence, or to insure his powers of endurance when supplied in the manner above described. Men there are, doubtless, whose tongues would not be stopped even by such an argument as this; but Mr. Moffat was not one of them. As the insidious fluid trickled down beneath his waistcoat, he felt that all further powers of coaxing the electors out of their votes, by words flowing from his tongue sweeter than honey, was for that occasion denied to him. He could not be self-confident, energetic, witty, and good-humoured with a rotten egg drying in through his clothes. He was forced, therefore, to give way, and with sadly-disconcerted air retired from the open window at which he had been standing.

It was in vain that the Honourable George, Mr. Nearthewinde, and Frank endeavoured again to bring him to the charge. He was like a beaten prize-fighter, whose pluck has been cowed out of him, and who, if he stands up, only stands up to fall. Mr. Moffat got sulky also, and when he was pressed, said that Barchester and the people in it might be d——. "With all my heart," said Mr. Nearthewinde "That wouldn't have any effect on their votes."

But, in truth, it mattered very little whether Mr. Moffat spoke, or whether he didn't speak. Four o'clock was the hour for closing the poll, and that was now fast coming. Tremendous exertions had been made about half-past three, by a safe emissary sent from Nearthewinde, to prove to Mr. Reddypalm that all manner of contingent advantages would accrue to the Brown Bear if it should turn out that Mr. Moffat should take his seat for Barchester. No bribe was, of course, offered or even hinted at. The purity of Barchester was not contaminated during the day by one such curse as this. But a man, and a publican, would be required to do some great deed in the public line; to open some colossal tap; to draw beer for the million; and no one would be so fit as Mr. Reddypalm—if only it

might turn out that Mr. Moffat should, in the coming February, take his seat as member for Barchester.

But Mr. Reddypalm was a man of humble desires, whose ambition soared no higher than this—that his little bills should be duly settled. It is wonderful what love an innkeeper has for his bill in its entirety. An account, with a respectable total of five or six pounds, is brought to you, and you complain but of one article; that fire in the bedroom was never lighted; or that second glass of brandy-and-water never called for. You desire to have the shilling expunged, and all your host's pleasure in the whole transaction is destroyed. Oh! my friends, pay for the brandy-and-water, though you never drank it; suffer the fire to pass, though it never warmed you. Why make a good man miserable for such a trifle?

It became notified to Reddypalm with sufficient clearness that his bill for the past election should be paid without further question; and, therefore, at five o'clock the mayor of Barchester proclaimed the results of the contest in the following figures:—

Scatcherd . . .	378
Moffat . .	376

Mr. Reddypalm's two votes had decided the question. Mr. Nearthewinde immediately went up to town; and the dinner-party at Courcy Castle that evening was not a particularly pleasant meal.

This much, however, had been absolutely decided before the yellow committee concluded their labour at the White Horse: there should be a petition. Mr. Nearthewinde had not been asleep, and already knew something of the manner in which Mr. Reddypalm's mind had been quieted.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Rivals

THE intimacy between Frank and Miss Dunstable grew and prospered. That is to say, it prospered as an intimacy, though perhaps hardly as a love affair. There was a continual succession of jokes between them, which no one else in the castle understood; but the very fact of there being such a good understanding between them rather stood in the way of, than assisted, that consummation which the countess desired. People, when they are in love with each other, or even when they pretend to be, do not generally show it by loud laughter. Nor is it frequently the case that a wife with two hundred thousand pounds can be won without some little preliminary despair. Now there was no despair at all about Frank Gresham.

Lady de Courcy, who thoroughly understood that portion of the world in which she herself lived, saw that things were not going quite as they should do, and gave much and repeated advice to Frank on the subject. She was the more eager in doing this, because she imagined Frank had done what he could to obey her first precepts. He had not turned up his nose at Miss Dunstable's curls, or found fault with her loud voice: he had not objected to her as ugly, or even shown any dislike to her age. A young man who had been so amenable to reason was worthy of further assistance; and so Lady de Courcy did what she could to assist him.

"Frank, my dear boy," she would say, "you are a little too noisy, I think. I don't mean for myself, you know; I don't mind it. But Miss Dunstable would like it better if you were a little more quiet with her."

"Would she, aunt?" said Frank, looking demurely up into the countess's face. "I rather think she likes fun and

noise, and that sort of thing. You know she's not very quiet herself."

"Ah!—but Frank, there are times, you know, when that sort of thing should be laid aside. Fun, as you call it, is all very well in its place. Indeed, no one likes it better than I do. But that's not the way to show admiration. Young ladies like to be admired; and if you'll be a little more soft-mannered with Miss Dunstable, I'm sure you'll find it will answer better!"

And so the old bird taught the young bird how to fly —very needlessly—for in this matter of flying, Nature gives her own lessons thoroughly; and the ducklings will take the water, even though the maternal hen warn them against the perfidious element never so loudly.

Soon after this, Lady de Courcy began to be not very well pleased in the matter. She took it into her head that Miss Dunstable was sometimes almost inclined to laugh at her; and on one or two occasions it almost seemed as though Frank was joining Miss Dunstable in doing so. The fact, indeed, was, that Miss Dunstable was fond of fun; and, endowed as she was with all the privileges which two hundred thousand pounds may be supposed to give to a young lady, did not very much care at whom she laughed. She was able to make a tolerably correct guess at Lady de Courcy's plan towards herself; but she did not for a moment think that Frank had any intention of furthering his aunt's views. She was, therefore, not at all ill-inclined to have her revenge upon the countess.

"How very fond your aunt is of you!" she said to him one wet morning, as he was sauntering through the house; now laughing, and almost romping with her—then teasing his sister about Mr. Moffat—and then bothering his lady-cousins out of all their propriety.

"Oh, very!" said Frank. "She is a dear, good woman, is my aunt De Courcy."

"I declare she takes more notice of you and your doings than of any of your cousins. I wonder they ain't jealous."

"Oh! they're such good people. Bless me, they'd never be jealous."

"You are so much younger than they are, that I suppose she thinks you want more of her care."

"Yes; that's it. You see she's fond of having a baby to nurse."

"Tell me, Mr. Gresham, what was it she was saying to you last night? I know we had been misbehaving ourselves dreadfully. It was all your fault; you would make me laugh so."

"That's just what I said to her."

"She was talking about me, then?"

"How on earth should she talk of any one else as long as you are here! Don't you know that all the world is talking about you?"

"Is it?—dear me, how kind! But I don't care a straw about any world just at present but Lady de Courcy's world. What did she say?"

"She said you were very beautiful—"

"Did she?—how good of her!"

"No; I forgot. It—it was I that said that; and she said—what was it she said? She said, that after all beauty was but skin deep—and that she valued you for your virtues and prudence rather than your good looks."

"Virtues and prudence! She said I was prudent and virtuous?"

"Yes."

"And you talked of my beauty? That was so kind of you! You didn't either of you say anything about other matters?"

"What other matters?"

"Oh!—I don't know. Only some people are sometimes valued rather for what they've got than for any good qualities belonging to themselves intrinsically."

"That can never be the case with Miss Dunstable; especially not at Courcy Castle," said Frank, bowing easily from the corner of the sofa over which he was leaning.

"Of course not," said Miss Dunstable; and Frank at once perceived that she spoke in a tone of voice differing much from that half-bantering, half-good-humoured manner that was customary with her. "Of course not: any such idea would be quite out of the question at Courcy Castle; quite out of the question with Lady de Courcy." She paused a moment, and then added in a tone different again, and unlike any that he had yet heard from her:—"It is, at any rate, out of the question with Mr. Frank Gresham—of that I am quite sure."

Frank ought to have understood her, and have appreciated the good opinion which she intended to convey; but he did not entirely do so. He was hardly honest himself towards her; and he could not at first perceive that she intended to say that she thought him so. He knew very well that she was alluding to her own huge fortune, and was alluding also to the fact that people of fashion sought her because of it; but he did not know that she intended to express a true acquittal as regarded him of any such baseness.

And did he deserve to be acquitted? Yes; upon the whole he did: to be acquitted of that special sin. His desire to make Miss Dunstable temporarily subject to his sway arose, not from a hankering after her fortune, but from an ambition to get the better in a contest in which other men around him seemed to be failing.

For it must not be imagined that, with such a prize to be struggled for, all others stood aloof and allowed him to have his own way with the heiress undisputed. The chance of a wife with two hundred thousand pounds is a godsend which comes in a man's life too seldom to be neglected, let that chance be never so remote.

Frank was the heir to a large embarrassed property; and, therefore, the heads of families, putting their wisdoms together, had thought it most meet that this daughter of Plutus should, if possible, fall to his lot. But not so thought the Honourable George; and not so thought

another gentleman who was at that time an inmate of Courcy Castle.

These suitors perhaps somewhat despised their young rival's efforts. It may be that they had sufficient worldly wisdom to know that so important a crisis of life is not settled among quips and jokes, and that Frank was too much in jest to be in earnest. But be that as it may, his love-making did not stand in the way of their love-making; nor his hopes, if he had any, in the way of their hopes.

The Honourable George had discussed this matter with the Honourable John in a properly-fraternal manner. It may be that John had also an eye to the heiress; but, if so, he had ceded his views to his brother's superior claims; for it came about that they understood each other very well, and John favoured George with salutary advice on the occasion.

"If it is to be done at all, it should be done very sharp," said John.

"As sharp as you like," said George. "I'm not the fellow to be studying three months in what attitude I'll fall at a girl's feet."

"No; and when you are there you mustn't take three months more to study how you'll get up again. If you do it at all, you must do it sharp," repeated John, putting great stress on his advice.

"I have said a few soft words to her already, and she didn't seem to take them badly," said George.

"She's no chicken, you know," remarked John; "and with a woman like that, beating about the bush never does any good. The chances are she won't have you—that's of course; plums like that don't fall into a man's mouth merely for shaking the tree. But it's possible she may; and if she will, she's as likely to take you to-day as this day six months. If I were you I'd write her a letter."

"Write her a letter—eh?" said George, who did not altogether dislike the advice; for it seemed to take from his shoulders the burden of preparing a spoken address.

Though he was so glib in speaking about the farmers' daughters he felt that he should have some little difficulty in making known his passion to Miss Dunstable by word of mouth.

"Yes; write a letter. If she'll take you at all, she'll take you that way; half the matches going are made up by writing letters. Write her a letter and get it put on her dressing-table." George said that he would, and so he did.

George spoke quite truly when he hinted that he had said a few soft things to Miss Dunstable. Miss Dunstable, however, was accustomed to hear soft things. She had been carried much about in society among fashionable people since, on the settlement of her father's will, she had been pronounced heiress to all the ointment of Lebanon; and many men had made calculations respecting her similar to those which were now animating the brain of the Honourable George de Courcy. She was already quite accustomed to being the target at which spendthrifts and the needy rich might shoot their arrows: accustomed to being so shot at, and tolerably accustomed to protect herself without making scenes in the world, or rejecting the advantageous establishments offered to her with any loud expressions of disdain. The Honourable George, therefore, had been permitted to say soft things very much as a matter of course.

And very little more outward fracas arose from the correspondence which followed than had arisen from the soft things so said. George wrote the letter, and had it duly conveyed to Miss Dunstable's bed-chamber. Miss Dunstable duly received it, and had her answer conveyed back discreetly to George's hands. The correspondence ran as follows:—

"Courcy Castle, Aug. —, 185—.

"MY DEAREST MISS DUNSTABLE,

"I cannot but flatter myself that you must have perceived from my manner that you are not indifferent to me.

Indeed, indeed, you are not. I may truly say, and swear" (these last strong words had been put in by the special counsel of the Honourable John), "that if ever a man loved a woman truly, I truly love you. You may think it very odd that I should say this in a letter instead of speaking it out before your face; but your powers of raillery are so great" ('touch her up about her wit' had been the advice of the Honourable John) "that I am all but afraid to encounter them. Dearest, dearest Martha—oh do not blame me for so addressing you!—if you will trust your happiness to me, you shall never find that you have been deceived. My ambition shall be to make you shine in that circle which you are so well qualified to adorn, and to see you firmly fixed in that sphere of fashion for which all your tastes adapt you.

"I may safely assert—and I do assert it with my hand on my heart—that I am actuated by no mercenary motives. Far be it from me to marry any woman—no, not a princess,—on account of her money. No marriage can be happy without mutual affection; and I do fully trust—no, not trust, but hope—that there may be such between you and me, dearest Miss Dunstable. Whatever settlements you might propose, I should accede to. It is you, your sweet person, that I love, not your money.

"For myself, I need not remind you that I am the second son of my father; and that, as such, I hold no inconsiderable station in the world. My intention is to get into parliament, and to make a name for myself, if I can, among those who shine in the House of Commons. My elder brother, Lord Porlock, is, you are aware, unmarried; and we all fear that the family honours are not likely to be perpetuated by him, as he has all manner of troublesome liaisons which will probably prevent his settling in life. There is nothing at all of that kind in my way. It will indeed be a delight to place a coronet on the head of my lovely Martha: a coronet which can give no fresh grace to her, but which will be so much adorned by her wearing it.

"Dearest Miss Dunstable, I shall wait with the utmost impatience for your answer; and now, burning with hope that it may not be altogether unfavourable to my love, I beg permission to sign myself

"Your own most devoted,

"GEORGE DE COURCY."

The ardent lover had not to wait long for an answer from his mistress. She found this letter on her toilet-table one night as she went to bed. The next morning she came down to breakfast and met her swain with the most unconcerned air in the world; so much so that he began to think, as he munched his toast with rather a shamefaced look, that the letter on which so much was to depend had not yet come safely to hand. But his suspense was not of a prolonged duration. After breakfast, as was his wont, he went out to the stables with his brother and Frank Gresham; and while there, Miss Dunstable's man, coming up to him, touched his hat, and put a letter into his hand.

Frank, who knew the man, glanced at the letter and looked at his cousin; but he said nothing. He was, however, a little jealous, and felt that an injury was done to him by any correspondence between Miss Dunstable and his cousin George.

Miss Dunstable's reply was as follows; and it may be remarked that it was written in a very clear and well-penned hand, and one which certainly did not betray much emotion of the heart:—

"MY DEAR MR. DE COURCY,

"I am sorry to say that I had not perceived from your manner that you entertained any peculiar feelings towards me; as, had I done so, I should at once have endeavoured to put an end to them. I am much flattered by the way in which you speak of me; but I am in too humble a position to return your affection; and can, therefore, only express a hope that you may be soon able to eradicate it from your bosom. A letter is a very good way of making an offer, and

as such I do not think it at all odd; but I certainly did not expect such an honour last night. As to my raillery, I trust it has never yet hurt you. I can assure you it never shall. I hope you will soon have a worthier ambition than that to which you allude; for I am well aware that no attempt will ever make me shine anywhere.

"I am quite sure you have had no mercenary motives: such motives in marriage are very base, and quite below your name and lineage. Any little fortune that I may have must be a matter of indifference to one who looks forward, as you do, to put a coronet on his wife's brow. Nevertheless, for the sake of the family, I trust that Lord Porlock, in spite of his obstacles, may live to do the same for a wife of his own some of these days. I am glad to hear that there is nothing to interfere with your own prospects of domestic felicity.

"Sincerely hoping that you may be perfectly successful in your proud ambition to shine in parliament, and regretting extremely that I cannot share that ambition with you, I beg to subscribe myself, with very great respect,

"Your sincere well-wisher,

"MARTHA DUNSTABLE."

The Honourable George, with that modesty which so well became him, accepted Miss Dunstable's reply as a final answer to his little proposition, and troubled her with no further courtship. As he said to his brother John, no harm had been done, and he might have better luck next time. But there was an inmate of Courcy Castle who was somewhat more pertinacious in his search after love and wealth. This was no other than Mr. Moffat: a gentleman whose ambition was not satisfied by the cares of his Barchester contest, or the possession of one affianced bride.

Mr. Moffat was, as we have said, a man of wealth; but we all know, from the lessons of our early youth, how the love of money increases and gains strength by its own success. Nor was he a man of so mean a spirit as to be

satisfied with mere wealth. He desired also place and station, and gracious countenance among the great ones of the earth. Hence had come his adherence to the De Courcys; hence his seat in parliament; and hence, also, his perhaps ill-considered match with Miss Gresham.

There is no doubt but that the privilege of matrimony offers opportunities to money-loving young men which ought not to be lightly abused. Too many young men marry without giving any consideration to the matter whatever. It is not that they are indifferent to money, but that they recklessly miscalculate their own value, and omit to look around and see how much is done by those who are more careful. A man can be young but once, and, except in cases of a special interposition of Providence, can marry but once. The chance once thrown away may be said to be irrecoverable! How, in after life, do men toil and turmoil through long years to attain some prospect of doubtful advancement! Half that trouble, half that care, a tithe of that circumspection would, in early youth, have probably secured to them the enduring comfort of a wife's wealth.

You will see men labouring night and day to become bank directors; and even a bank direction may only be the road to ruin. Others will spend years in degrading subserviency to obtain a niche in a will; and the niche, when at last obtained and enjoyed, is but a sorry payment for all that has been endured. Others, again, struggle harder still, and go through even deeper waters: they make the wills for themselves, forge stock shares, and fight with unremitting, painful labour to appear to be the thing that they are not. Now, in many of these cases, all this might have been spared had the men made adequate use of those opportunities which youth and youthful charms afford once—and once only. There is no road to wealth so easy and respectable as that of matrimony; that is, of course, provided that the aspirant declines the slow course of honest work. But then, we can so seldom put old heads on young shoulders!

In the case of Mr. Moffat, we may perhaps say that a specimen was produced of this bird, so rare in the land. His shoulders were certainly young, seeing that he was not yet six-and-twenty; but his head had ever been old. From the moment when he was first put forth to go alone—at the age of twenty-one—his life had been one calculation how he could make the most of himself. He had allowed himself to be betrayed into no folly by an unguarded heart; no youthful indiscretion had marred his prospects. He had made the most of himself. Without wit, or depth, or any mental gift—without honesty of purpose or industry for good work—he had been for two years sitting member for Barchester; was the guest of Lord de Courcy; was engaged to the eldest daughter of one of the best commoners' families in England; and was, when he first began to think of Miss Dunstable, sanguine that his re-election to parliament was secure.

When, however, at this period he began to calculate what his position in the world really was, it occurred to him that he was doing an ill-judged thing in marrying Miss Gresham. Why marry a pennyless girl—for Augusta's trifle of fortune was not a penny in his estimation—while there was Miss Dunstable in the world to be won? His own six or seven thousand a-year, quite unembarrassed as it was, was certainly a great thing; but what might he not do if to that he could add the almost fabulous wealth of the great heiress? Was she not here, put absolutely in his path? Would it not be a wilful throwing away of a chance not to avail himself of it? He must, to be sure, lose the De Courcy friendship; but if he should then have secured his Barchester seat for the usual term of a parliamentary session, he might be able to spare that. He would also, perhaps, encounter some Gresham enmity: this was a point on which he did think more than once; but what will not a man encounter for the sake of two hundred thousand pounds?

It was thus that Mr. Moffat argued with himself, with much prudence, and brought himself to resolve that he

would at any rate become a candidate for the great prize. He also, therefore, began to say his soft things; and it must be admitted that he said them with more considerate propriety than had the Honourable George. Mr. Moffat had an idea that Miss Dunstable was not a fool, and that in order to catch her he must do more than endeavour to lay salt on her tail, in the guise of flattery. It was evident to him that she was a bird of some cunning, not to be caught by an ordinary gin, such as those commonly in use with the Honourable Georges of society.

It seemed to Mr. Moffat, that though Miss Dunstable was so sprightly, so full of fun, and so ready to chatter on all subjects, she well knew the value of her own money, and of her position as dependent on it: he perceived that she never flattered the countess, and seemed to be no whit absorbed by the titled grandeur of her host's family. He gave her credit, therefore, for an independent spirit; and an independent spirit in his estimation was one that placed its sole dependence on a respectable balance at its banker's.

Working on these ideas, Mr. Moffat commenced operations in such manner that his overtures to the heiress should not, if unsuccessful, interfere with the Greshamsbury engagement. He begins by making common cause with Miss Dunstable: their positions in the world, he said to her, were very closely similar. They had both risen from the lower class by the strength of honest industry: they were both now wealthy, and had both hitherto made such use of their wealth as to induce the highest aristocracy of England to admit them into their circles.

"Yes, Mr. Moffat," had Miss Dunstable remarked; "and, if all that I hear be true, to admit you into their very families."

At this Mr. Moffat slightly demurred. He would not affect, he said, to misunderstand what Miss Dunstable meant. There had been something said on the probability of such an event; but he begged Miss Dunstable not to believe all that she heard on such subjects.

"I do not believe much," said she; "but I certainly did think that that might be credited."

Mr. Moffat then went on to show how it behoved them both, in holding out their hands half-way to meet the aristocratic overtures that were made to them, not to allow themselves to be made use of. The aristocracy, according to Mr. Moffat, were people of a very nice sort; the best acquaintance in the world: a portion of mankind to be noticed by whom should be one of the first objects in life of the Dunstables and Moffats. But the Dunstables and Moffats should be very careful to give little or nothing in return. Much, very much, in return would be looked for. The aristocracy, said Mr. Moffat, were not a people to allow the light of their countenance to shine forth without looking for a *quid pro quo*, for some compensating value. In all their intercourse with the Dunstables and Moffats, they would expect a payment. It was for the Dunstables and Moffats to see that, at any rate, they did not pay more for the article they got than its market value.

The way in which she, Miss Dunstable, and he, Mr. Moffat, would be required to pay would be by taking each of them some poor scion of the aristocracy in marriage; and thus expending their hard-earned wealth in procuring high-blooded pleasures for some well-born pauper. Against this, peculiar caution was to be used. Of course, the further induction to be shown was this: that people so circumstanced should marry among themselves; the Dunstables and the Moffats each with the other, and not tumble into the pitfalls prepared for them.

Whether these great lessons had any lasting effect on Miss Dunstable's mind may be doubted. Perhaps she had already made up her mind on the subject which Mr. Moffat so well discussed. She was older than Mr. Moffat, and, in spite of his two years of parliamentary experience, had perhaps more knowledge of the world with which she had to deal. But she listened to what he said with complacency; understood his object as well as she had that of

his aristocratic rival; was no whit offended; but groaned in her spirit as she thought of the wrongs of Augusta Gresham.

But all this good advice, however, would not win the money for Mr. Moffat without some more decided step; and that step he soon decided on taking, feeling assured that what he had said would have its due weight with the heiress.

The party at Courcy Castle was now soon about to be broken up. The male De Courcys were going down to a Scotch mountain. The female De Courcys were to be shipped off to an Irish castle. Mr. Moffat was to go up to town to prepare his petition. Miss Dunstable was again about to start on a foreign tour in behalf of her physician and attendants; and Frank Gresham was at last to be allowed to go to Cambridge; that is to say, unless his success with Miss Dunstable should render such a step on his part quite preposterous.

"I think you may speak now, Frank," said the countess. "I really think you may: you have known her now for a considerable time; and, as far as I can judge, she is very fond of you."

"Nonsense, aunt," said Frank; "she doesn't care a button for me."

"I think differently; and lookers-on, you know, always understand the game best. I suppose you are not afraid to ask her."

"Afraid!" said Frank, in a tone of considerable scorn. He almost made up his mind that he would ask her to show that he was not afraid. His only obstacle to doing so was, that he had not the slightest intention of marrying her.

There was to be but one other great event before the party broke up, and that was a dinner at the Duke of Omnium's. The duke had already declined to come to Courcy; but he had in a measure atoned for this by asking some of the guests to join a great dinner which he was about to give to his neighbours.

Mr. Moffat was to leave Courcy Castle the day after the dinner-party, and he therefore determined to make his great attempt on the morning of that day. It was with some difficulty that he brought about an opportunity; but at last he did so, and found himself alone with Miss Dunstable in the walks of Courcy park.

"It is a strange thing, is it not," said he, recurring to his old view of the same subject, "that I should be going to dine with the Duke of Omnium—the richest man they say among the whole English aristocracy?"

"Men of that kind entertain everybody, I believe, now and then," said Miss Dunstable, not very civilly.

"I believe they do; but I am not going as one of the everybodies. I am going from Lord de Courcy's house with some of his own family. I have no pride in that—not the least; I have more pride in my father's honest industry. But it shows what money does in this country of ours."

"Yes, indeed; money does a great many queer things." In saying this Miss Dunstable could not but think that money had done a very queer thing in inducing Miss Gresham to fall in love with Moffat.

"Yes; wealth is very powerful: here we are, Miss Dunstable, the most honoured guests in this house."

"Oh! I don't know about that; you may be, for you are a member of parliament, and all that—"

"No; not a member now, Miss Dunstable."

"Well, you will be, and that's all the same; but I have no such title to honour, thank God."

They walked on in silence for a little while, for Mr. Moffat hardly knew how to manage the business he had in hand. "It is quite delightful to watch these people," he said at last: "now they accuse us of being tuft-hunters."

"Do they?" said Miss Dunstable. "Upon my word I didn't know that anybody ever so accused me."

"I didn't mean you and me personally."

"Oh! I'm glad of that."

"But that is what the world says of persons of our class. Now it seems to me that the toadying is all on the other side. The countess here does toady you, and so do the young ladies."

"Do they? if so, upon my word I didn't know it. But, to tell the truth, I don't think much of such things. I live mostly to myself, Mr. Moffat."

"I see that you do, and I admire you for it; but, Miss Dunstable, you cannot always live so," and Mr. Moffat looked at her in a manner which gave her the first intimation of his coming burst of tenderness.

"That's as may be, Mr. Moffat," said she.

He went on beating about the bush for some time—giving her to understand how necessary it was that persons situated as they were should live either for themselves or for each other, and that, above all things, they should beware of falling into the mouths of voracious aristocratic lions who go about looking for prey—till they came to a turn in the grounds; at which Miss Dunstable declared her determination of going in. She had walked enough, she said. As by this time Mr. Moffat's immediate intentions were becoming visible she thought it prudent to retire. "Don't let me take you in, Mr. Moffat; but my boots are a little damp, and Dr. Easyman will never forgive me if I do not hurry in as fast as I can."

"Your feet damp?—I hope not: I do hope not," said he with a look of the greatest solicitude.

"Oh! it's nothing to signify; but it's well to be prudent, you know. Good morning, Mr. Moffat."

"Miss Dunstable!"

"Eh—yes!" and Miss Dunstable stopped in the grand path. "I won't let you return with me, Mr. Moffat, because I know you were not coming in so soon."

"Miss Dunstable; I shall be leaving this to-morrow."

"Yes; and I go myself the day after."

"I know it. I am going to town and you are going abroad. It may be long—very long—before we meet again."

"About Easter," said Miss Dunstable; "that is, if the doctor doesn't knock up on the road."

"And I had, had wished to say something before we part for so long a time. Miss Dunstable—"

"Stop!—Mr. Moffat. Let me ask you one question. I'll hear anything that you have got to say, but on one condition: that is, that Miss Augusta Gresham shall be by while you say it. Will you consent to that?"

"Miss Augusta Gresham," said he, "has no right to listen to my private conversation."

"Has she not, Mr. Moffat? then I think she should have. I, at any rate, will not so far interfere with what I look on as her undoubted privileges as to be a party to any secret in which she may not participate."

"But, Miss Dunstable—"

"And to tell you fairly, Mr. Moffat, any secret that you do tell me, I shall most undoubtedly repeat to her before dinner. Good morning, Mr. Moffat: my feet are certainly a little damp, and if I stay a moment longer, Dr. Easyman will put off my foreign trip for at least a week." And so she left him standing alone in the middle of the gravel walk.

For a moment or two Mr. Moffat consoled himself in his misfortune by thinking how he might best avenge himself on Miss Dunstable. Soon, however, such futile ideas left his brain. Why should he give over the chase because the rich galleon had escaped him on this, his first cruise in pursuit of her? Such prizes were not to be won so easily. Her present objection clearly consisted in his engagement to Miss Gresham, and in that only. Let that engagement be at an end, notoriously and publicly broken off, and this objection would fall to the ground. Yes; ships so richly frieghted were not to be run down in one summer morning's plain sailing. Instead of looking for his revenge on Miss Dunstable, it would be more prudent in him—more in keeping with his character—to pursue his object, and overcome such difficulties as he might find in his way.

CHAPTER XIX

The Duke of Omnium

THE Duke of Omnium was, as we have said, a bachelor. Not the less on that account did he on certain rare gala days entertain the beauty of the county at his magnificent rural seat, or the female fashion of London in Belgrave-square; but on this occasion the dinner at Gatherum Castle—for such was the name of his mansion—was to be confined to the lords of the creation. It was to be one of those days on which he collected round his board all the notables of the county, in order that his popularity might not wane, or the established glory of his hospitable house become dim.

On such an occasion it was not probable that Lord de Courcy would be one of the guests. The party, indeed, who went from Courcy Castle was not large, and consisted of the Honourable George, Mr. Moffat, and Frank Gresham. They went in a tax-cart, with a tandem horse, driven very knowingly by George de Courcy; and the fourth seat on the back of the vehicle was occupied by a servant, who was to look after the horses at Gatherum.

The Honourable George drove either well or luckily, for he reached the duke's house in safety; but he drove very fast. Poor Miss Dunstable! what would have been her lot had anything but good happened to that vehicle, so richly freighted with her three lovers! They did not quarrel as to the prize, and all reached Gatherum Castle in good humour with each other.

The castle was a new building of white stone, lately erected at an enormous cost by one of the first architects of the day. It was an immense pile, and seemed to cover ground enough for a moderate-sized town. But, nevertheless, report said that when it was completed the noble owner found that he had no rooms to live in; and that, on

this account, when disposed to study his own comfort, he resided in a house of perhaps one-tenth the size, built by his grandfather in another county.

Gatherum Castle would probably be called Italian in its style of architecture; though it may, I think, be doubted whether any such edifice, or anything like it, was ever seen in any part of Italy. It was a vast edifice; irregular in height —or it appeared to be so—having long wings on each side, too high to be passed over by the eye as mere adjuncts to the mansion, and a portico so large as to make the house behind it look like another building of a greater altitude. This portico was supported by Ionic columns, and was in itself doubtless a beautiful structure. It was approached by a flight of steps, very broad and very grand; but, as an approach by a flight of steps hardly suits an Englishman's house, to the immediate entrance of which it is necessary that his carriage should drive, there was another front door in one of the wings which was commonly used. A carriage, however, could on very stupendously grand occasions— the visits, for instance, of queens and kings, and royal dukes—be brought up under the portico; as the steps had been so constructed as to admit of a road, with a rather stiff ascent, being made close in front of the wing up into the very porch.

Opening from the porch was the grand hall, which extended up to the top of the house. It was magnificent, indeed; being decorated with many-coloured marbles, and hung round with various trophies of the house of Omnium: banners were there, and armour; the sculptured busts of many noble progenitors; full-length figures in marble of those who had been especially prominent; and every monument of glory that wealth, long years, and great achievements could bring together. If only a man could but live in his hall and be for ever happy there! But the Duke of Omnium could not live happily in his hall; and the fact was, that the architect, in contriving this magnificent entrance for his own honour and fame, had destroyed

the duke's house as regards most of the ordinary purposes of residence.

Nevertheless, Gatherum Castle is a very noble pile; and, standing as it does, on an eminence, has a very fine effect when seen from many a distant knoll and verdant-wooded hill.

At seven o'clock Mr. de Courcy and his friends got down from their drag at the smaller door—for this was no day on which to mount up under the portico; nor was that any suitable vehicle to have been entitled to such honour. Frank felt some excitement a little stronger than that usual to him at such moments, for he had never yet been in company with the Duke of Omnium; and he rather puzzled himself to think on what points he would talk to the man who was the largest landholder in that county in which he himself had so great an interest. He, however, made up his mind that he would allow the duke to choose his own subjects; merely reserving to himself the right of pointing out how deficient in gorse covers was West Barsetshire—that being the duke's division.

They were soon divested of their coats and hats, and, without entering on the magnificence of the great hall, were conducted through rather a narrow passage into rather a small drawing-room—small, that is, in proportion to the number of gentlemen there assembled. There might be about thirty, and Frank was inclined to think that they were almost crowded. A man came forward to greet them when their names were announced: but our hero at once knew that he was not the duke; for this man was fat and short, whereas, the duke was thin and tall.

There was a great hubbub going on; for everybody seemed to be talking to his neighbour; or, in default of a neighbour, to himself. It was clear that the exalted rank of their host had put very little constraint on his guests' tongues, for they chatted away with as much freedom as farmers at an ordinary.

"Which is the duke?" at last Frank contrived to whisper to his cousin.

"Oh!—he's not here," said George; "I suppose he'll be in presently. I believe he never shows till just before dinner."

Frank, of course, had nothing further to say; but he already began to feel himself a little snubbed: he thought that the duke, duke though he was, when he asked people to dinner should be there to tell them that he was glad to see them.

More people flashed into the room, and Frank found himself rather closely wedged in with a stout clergyman of his acquaintance. He was not badly off, for Mr. Athill was a friend of his own, who had held a living near Greshamsbury. Lately, however, at the lamented decease of Dr. Stanhope—who had died of apoplexy at his villa in Italy—Mr. Athill had been presented with the better preferment of Eiderdown, and had, therefore, removed to another part of the county. He was somewhat of a *bon-vivant*, and a man who thoroughly understood dinner-parties; and with much good nature he took Frank under his special protection.

"You stick to me, Mr. Gresham," he said, "when we go into the dining-room. I'm an old hand at the duke's dinners, and know how to make a friend comfortable as well as myself."

"But why doesn't the duke come in?" demanded Frank.

"He'll be here as soon as dinner is ready," said Mr. Athill. "Or, rather, the dinner will be ready as soon as he is here. I don't care, therefore, how soon he comes."

Frank did not understand this, but he had nothing to do but to wait and see how things went.

He was beginning to be impatient, for the room was now nearly full, and it seemed evident that no other guests were coming; when suddenly a bell rang, and a gong was sounded, and at the same instant a door that had not yet been used flew open, and a very plainly-dressed, plain, tall man, entered the room. Frank at once knew that he was at last in presence of the Duke of Omnium.

But his grace, late as he was in commencing the duties as host, seemed in no hurry to make up for lost time. He quietly stood on the rug, with his back to the empty grate, and spoke one or two words in a very low voice to one or two gentlemen who stood nearest to him. The crowd, in the meanwhile, became suddenly silent. Frank, when he found that the duke did not come and speak to him, felt that he ought to go and speak to the duke; but no one else did so, and when he whispered his surprise to Mr. Athill, that gentleman told him that this was the duke's practice on all such occasions.

"Fothergill," said the duke—and it was the only word he had yet spoken out loud—"I believe we are ready for dinner." Now Mr. Fothergill was the duke's land-agent, and he it was who had greeted Frank and his friends at their entrance.

Immediately the gong was again sounded, and another door, leading out of the drawing-room into the dining-room, was opened. The duke led the way, and then the guests followed. "Stick close to me, Mr. Gresham," said Athill, "we'll get about the middle of the table, where we shall be cosy—and on the other side of the room, out of this dreadful draught—I know the place well, Mr. Gresham; stick to me."

Mr. Athill, who was a pleasant, chatty companion, had hardly seated himself, and was talking to Frank as quickly as he could, when Mr. Fothergill, who sat at the bottom of the table, asked him to say grace. It seemed to be quite out of the question that the duke should take any trouble with his guests whatever. Mr. Athill consequently dropped the word that he was speaking, and uttered a prayer—if it was a prayer—that they might all have grateful hearts for that which God was about to give them.

If it was a prayer! As far as my own experience goes such utterances are seldom prayers, seldom can be prayers. And if not prayers, what then? To me it is unintelligible that the full tide of glibbest chatter can be stopped at a moment

in the midst of profuse good living, and the Giver thanked becomingly in words of heartfelt praise. Setting aside for the moment what one daily hears and sees, may one not declare that a change so sudden is not within the compass of the human mind? But then, to such reasoning one cannot but add what one does hear and see; one cannot but judge of the ceremony by the manner in which one sees it performed—uttered, that is—and listened to. Clergymen there are—one meets them now and then—who endeavour to give to the dinner-table grace some of the solemnity of a church ritual, and what is the effect? Much the same as though one were to be interrupted for a minute in the midst of one of our church liturgies to hear a drinking song.

And will it be argued, that a man need be less thankful because, at the moment of receiving, he utters no thanksgiving? or will it be thought that a man is made thankful because what is called a grace is uttered after dinner? It can hardly be imagined that any one will so argue, or so think.

Dinner-graces are, probably, the last remaining relic of certain daily services* which the church in olden days enjoined: nones, complines, and vespers were others. Of the nones and complines we have happily got quit; and it might be well if we could get rid of the dinner-graces also. Let any man ask himself whether, on his own part, they are acts of prayer and thanksgiving—and if not that, what then?

When the large party entered the dining-room one or two gentlemen might be seen to come in from some other door and set themselves at the table near to the duke's chair. These were guests of his own, who were staying in the house, his particular friends, the men with whom he lived; the others were strangers whom he fed, perhaps

*It is, I know, alleged that graces are said before dinner, because our Saviour uttered a blessing before His last supper. I cannot say that the idea of such analogy is pleasing to me.

'A majestic avenue of limes'

once a year, in order that his name might be known in the land as that of one who distributed food and wine hospitably through the county. The food and wine, the attendance also, and the view of the vast repository of plate he vouchsafed willingly to his county neighbours; but it was beyond his good nature to talk to them. To judge by the present appearance of most of them, they were quite as well satisfied to be left alone.

Frank was altogether a stranger there, but Mr. Athill knew every one at the table.

"That's Apjohn," said he: "don't you know Mr. Apjohn, the attorney from Barchester? he's always here; he does some of Fothergill's law business, and makes himself useful. If any fellow knows the value of a good dinner, he does. You'll see that the duke's hospitality will not be thrown away upon him."

"It's very much thrown away upon me, I know," said Frank, who could not at all put up with the idea of sitting down to dinner without having been spoken to by his host.

"Oh, nonsense," said his clerical friend; "you'll enjoy yourself amazingly by-and-by. There is not such champagne in any other house in Barsetshire; and then the claret—" And Mr. Athill pressed his lips together, and gently shook his head, meaning to signify by the motion that the claret of Gatherum Castle was sufficient atonement for any penance which a man might have to go through in his mode of obtaining it.

"Who's that funny little man sitting there, next but one to Mr. de Courcy? I never saw such a queer fellow in my life."

"Don't you know old Bolus? Well, I thought every one in Barsetshire knew Bolus; you especially should do so, as he is such a dear friend of Dr. Thorne."

"A dear friend of Dr. Thorne?"

"Yes; he was apothecary at Scarington in the old days, before Dr. Fillgrave came into vogue. I remember when Bolus was thought to be a very good sort of a doctor."

"Is he—is he—" whispered Frank, "is he by way of a gentleman?"

"Ha! ha! ha! Well, I suppose we must be charitable, and say that he is quite as good, at any rate, as many others there are here—" and Mr. Athill, as he spoke, whispered into Frank's ear, "You see, there's Finnie here, another Barchester attorney. Now, I really think where Finnie goes Bolus may go too."

"The more the merrier, I suppose," said Frank.

"Well, something a little like that. I wonder why Thorne is not here? I'm sure he was asked."

"Perhaps he did not particularly wish to meet Finnie and Bolus. Do you know, Mr. Athill, I think he was quite right not to come. As for myself, I wish I was anywhere else."

"Ha! ha! ha! You don't know the duke's ways yet; and what's more, you're young, you happy fellow! But Thorne should have more sense; he ought to show himself here."

The gormandizing was now going on at a tremendous rate. Though the volubility of their tongues had been for a while stopped by the first shock of the duke's presence, the guests seemed to feel no such constraint upon their teeth. They fed, one may almost say, rabidly, and gave their orders to the servants in an eager manner; much more impressive than that usual at smaller parties. Mr. Apjohn, who sat immediately opposite to Frank, had, by some well-planned manœuvre, contrived to get before him the jowl of a salmon; but unfortunately, he was not for a while equally successful in the article of sauce. A very limited portion—so at least thought Mr. Apjohn—had been put on his plate; and a servant, with a huge sauce tureen, absolutely passed behind his back inattentive to his audible requests. Poor Mr. Apjohn in his despair turned round to arrest the man by his coat-tails; but he was a moment too late, and all but fell backwards on the floor. As he righted himself he muttered an anathema, and looked with a face of mute anguish at his plate.

"Anything the matter, Apjohn?" said Mr. Fothergill, kindly, seeing the utter despair written on the poor man's countenance; "can I get anything for you?"

"The sauce!" said Mr. Apjohn, in a voice that would have melted a hermit; and as he looked at Mr. Fothergill, he pointed at the now distant sinner, who was dispensing his melted ambrosia at least ten heads upwards away from the unfortunate supplicant.

Mr. Fothergill, however, knew where to look for balm for such wounds, and in a minute or two Mr. Apjohn was employed quite to his heart's content.

"Well," said Frank, to his neighbour, "it may be very well once in a way; but I think that on the whole Dr. Thorne is right."

"My dear Mr. Gresham, see the world on all sides," said Mr. Athill, who had also been somewhat intent on the gratification of his own appetite, though with an energy less evident than that of the gentleman opposite. "See the world on all sides if you have an opportunity; and, believe me, a good dinner now and then is a very good thing."

"Yes; but I don't like eating it with hogs."

"Whish—h; softly, softly, Mr. Gresham, or you'll disturb Mr. Apjohn's digestion. Upon my word, he'll want it all before he has done. Now, I like this kind of thing once in a way."

"Do you?" said Frank, in a tone that was almost savage.

"Yes; indeed I do. One sees so much character. And after all, what harm does it do?"

"My idea is that people should live with those whose society is pleasant to them."

"Live—yes, Mr. Gresham—I agree with you there. It wouldn't do for me to live with the Duke of Omnium; I shouldn't understand, or probably approve, his ways. Nor should I, perhaps, much like the constant presence of Mr. Apjohn. But now and then—once in a year or so—I do own I like to see them both. Here's the cup; now whatever

you do, Mr. Gresham, don't pass the cup without tasting it."

And so the dinner passed on, slowly enough as Frank thought, but all too quickly for Mr. Apjohn. It passed away, and the wine came circulating freely. The tongues again were loosed, the teeth being released from their labours, and under the influence of the claret the duke's presence was forgotten.

But very speedily the coffee was brought. "This will soon be over now," said Frank, to himself, thankfully; for though he by no means despised good claret, he had lost his temper too completely to enjoy it at the present moment. But he was much mistaken; the farce as yet was only at its commencement. The duke took his cup of coffee, and so did the few friends who sat close to him; but the beverage did not seem to be in great request with the majority of the guests. When the duke had taken his modicum, he rose up and silently retired, saying no word and making no sign. And then the farce commenced.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Fothergill, cheerily, "we are all right. Apjohn, is there claret there? Mr. Bolus, I know you stick to the Madeira; you are quite right, for there isn't much of it left, and my belief is there'll never be more like it."

And so the duke's hospitality went on, and the duke's guests drank merrily for the next two hours.

"Shan't we see any more of him?" asked Frank.

"Any more of whom?" said Mr. Athill.

"Of the duke?"

"Oh, no; you'll see no more of him. He always goes when the coffee comes. It's brought in as an excuse. We've had enough of the light of his countenance to last till next year. The duke and I are excellent friends; have been so these fifteen years; but I never see more of him than that."

"I shall go away," said Frank.

"Nonsense. Mr. de Courcy and your other friend won't stir for this hour yet."

"I don't care. I shall walk on, and they may catch me. I may be wrong; but it seems to me that a man insults me when he asks me to dine with him and never speaks to me. I don't care if he be ten times Duke of Omnium; he can't be more than a gentleman, and as such I am his equal." And then, having thus given vent to his feelings in somewhat high-flown language, he walked forth and trudged away along the road towards Courcy.

Frank Gresham had been born and bred a Conservative, whereas the Duke of Omnium was well known as a consistent Whig. There is no one so devoutly resolved to admit of no superior as your Conservative, born and bred; no one so inclined to high domestic despotism as your thorough-going consistent old Whig.

When he had proceeded about six miles, Frank was picked up by his friends; but even then his anger had hardly cooled.

"Was the duke as civil as ever when you took your leave of him?" said he to his cousin George, as he took his seat on the drag.

"The juke has jeuced jude wine—lem me tell you that, old fella," hiccupped out the Honourable George as he touched up the leader under the flank.

CHAPTER XX

The Proposal

AND now the departures from Courcy Castle came rapidly one after another, and there remained but one more evening before Miss Dunstable's carriage was to be packed. The countess, in the early moments of Frank's courtship, had controlled his ardour and checked the rapidity of his amorous professions; but as days, and at last weeks, wore away, she found that it was necessary to stir the fire which she had before endeavoured to slacken.

"There will be nobody here to-night but our own circle," said she to him, "and I really think you should tell Miss Dunstable what your intentions are. She will have fair ground to complain of you if you do not."

Frank began to feel that he was in a dilemma. He had commenced making love to Miss Dunstable partly because he liked the amusement, and partly from a satirical propensity to quiz his aunt by appearing to fall into her scheme. But he had overshot the mark, and did not know what answer to give when he was thus called upon to make a downright proposal. And then, although he did not care two rushes about Miss Dunstable in the way of love, he nevertheless experienced a sort of jealousy when he found that she appeared to be indifferent to him, and that she corresponded the meanwhile with his cousin George. Though all their flirtations had been carried on on both sides palpably by way of fun, though Frank had told himself ten times a day that his heart was true to Mary Thorne, yet he had an undefined feeling that it behoved Miss Dunstable to be a little in love with him. He was not quite at ease in that she was not a little melancholy now that his departure was so nigh; and, above all, he was anxious to know what were the real facts about that letter. He had in his own breast threatened Miss Dunstable with a heart-

ache; and now, when the time for their separation came, he found that his own heart was the more likely to ache of the two.

"I suppose I must say something to her, or my aunt will never be satisfied," said he to himself as he sauntered into the little drawing-room on that last evening. But at the very time he was ashamed of himself, for he knew that he was going to ask badly.

His sister and one of his cousins were in the room, but his aunt, who was quite on the alert, soon got them out of it, and Frank and Miss Dunstable were alone.

"So all our fun and all our laughter is come to an end," said she, beginning the conversation. "I don't know how you feel, but for myself I really am a little melancholy at the idea of parting;" and she looked up at him with her laughing black eyes, as though she never had, and never could have a care in the world.

"Melancholy! oh, yes; you look so," said Frank, who really did feel somewhat lack-a-daisically sentimental.

"But how thoroughly glad the countess must be that we are both going," continued she. "I declare we have treated her most infamously. Ever since we've been here we've had all the amusement to ourselves. I've sometimes thought she would turn me out of the house."

"I wish with all my heart she had."

"Oh, you cruel barbarian! why on earth should you wish that?"

"That I might have joined you in your exile. I hate Courcy Castle and should have rejoiced to leave—and—and—"

"And what?"

"And I love Miss Dunstable, and should have doubly, trebly rejoiced to leave it with her."

Frank's voice quivered a little as he made this gallant profession; but still Miss Dunstable only laughed the louder. "Upon my word, of all my knights, you are by far the best behaved," said she, "and say much the prettiest

things." Frank became rather red in the face, and felt that he did so. Miss Dunstable was treating him like a boy. While she pretended to be so fond of him she was only laughing at him, and corresponding the while with his cousin George. Now Frank Gresham already entertained a sort of contempt for his cousin, which increased the bitterness of his feelings. Could it really be possible that George had succeeded while he had utterly failed; that his stupid cousin had touched the heart of the heiress while she was playing with him as with a boy?

"Of all your knights! Is that the way you talk to me when we are going to part? When was it, Miss Dunstable, that George de Courcy became one of them?"

Miss Dunstable for a while looked serious enough. "What makes you ask that?" said she. "What makes you inquire about Mr. de Courcy?"

"Oh, I have eyes, you know, and can't help seeing. Not that I see, or have seen anything that I could possibly help."

"And what have you seen, Mr. Gresham?"

"Why, I know you have been writing to him."

"Did he tell you so?"

"No; he did not tell me; but I know it."

For a moment she sat silent, and then her face again resumed her usual happy smile. "Come, Mr. Gresham, you are not going to quarrel with me, I hope, even if I did write a letter to your cousin. Why should I not write to him? I correspond with all manner of people. I'll write to you some of these days if you'll let me, and will promise to answer my letters."

Frank threw himself back on the sofa on which he was sitting, and, in doing so, brought himself somewhat nearer to his companion than he had been; he then drew his hand slowly across his forehead, pushing back his thick hair, and as he did so he sighed somewhat plaintively.

"I do not care," said he, "for the privilege of corre-

spondence on such terms. If my cousin George is to be a correspondent of yours also, I will give up my claim."

And then he sighed again, so that it was piteous to hear him. He was certainly an arrant puppy, and an egregious ass into the bargain; but then, it must be remembered in his favour that he was only twenty-one, and that much had been done to spoil him. Miss Dunstable did remember this, and therefore abstained from laughing at him.

"Why, Mr. Gresham, what on earth do you mean? In all human probability I shall never write another line to Mr. de Courcy; but, if I did, what possible harm could it do you?"

"Oh, Miss Dunstable! you do not in the least understand what my feelings are."

"Don't I? Then I hope I never shall. I thought I did. I thought they were the feelings of a good, true-hearted friend; feelings that I could sometimes look back upon with pleasure as being honest when so much that one meets is false. I have become very fond of you, Mr. Gresham, and I should be sorry to think that I do not understand your feelings."

This was almost worse and worse. Young ladies like Miss Dunstable—for she was still to be numbered in the category of young ladies—do not usually tell young gentlemen that they are very fond of them. To boys and girls they may make such a declaration. Now Frank Gresham regarded himself as one who had already fought his battles, and fought them not without glory; he could not therefore endure to be thus openly told by Miss Dunstable that she was very fond of him.

"Fond of me, Miss Dunstable! I wish you were."

"So I am—very."

"You little know how fond I am of you, Miss Dunstable," and he put out his hand to take hold of hers. She then lifted up her own, and slapped him lightly on the knuckles.

"And what can you have to say to Miss Dunstable that

can make it necessary that you should pinch her hand? I tell you fairly, Mr. Gresham, if you make a fool of yourself, I shall come to a conclusion that you are all fools, and that it is hopeless to look out for any one worth caring for."

Such advice as this, so kindly given, so wisely meant, so clearly intelligible, he should have taken and understood, young as he was. But even yet he did not do so.

"A fool of myself! Yes; I suppose I must be a fool if I have so much regard for Miss Dunstable as to make it painful to me to know that I am to see her no more: a fool; yes, of course I am a fool—a man is always a fool when he loves."

Miss Dunstable could not pretend to doubt his meaning any longer; and was determined to stop him, let it cost what it would. She now put out her hand, not over white, and, as Frank soon perceived, gifted with a very fair allowance of strength.

"Now, Mr. Gresham," said she, "before you go any further you shall listen to me. Will you listen to me for a moment without interrupting me?"

Frank was of course obliged to promise that he would do so.

"You are going—or rather you were going, for I shall stop you—to make to me a profession of love."

"A profession!" said Frank, making a slight unsuccessful effort to get his hand free.

"Yes; a profession—a false profession, Mr. Gresham,—a false profession—a false profession. Look into your heart—into your heart of hearts. I know you at any rate have a heart; look into it closely. Mr. Gresham, you know you do not love me; not as a man should love the woman whom he swears to love."

Frank was taken aback. So appealed to he found that he could not any longer say that he did love her. He could only look into her face with all his eyes, and sit there listening to her.

"How is it possible that you should love me? I am

Heaven knows how many years your senior. I am neither young nor beautiful, nor have I been brought up as she should be whom you in time will really love and make your wife. I have nothing that should make you love me; but—but, I am rich."

"It is not that," said Frank, stoutly, feeling himself imperatively called upon to utter something in his own defence.

"Ah, Mr. Gresham, I fear it is that. For what other reason can you have laid your plans to talk in this way to such a woman as I am?"

"I have had no plans," said Frank, now getting his hand to himself. "At any rate, you wrong me there, Miss Dunstable."

"I like you so well—nay, love you, if a woman may talk of love in the way of friendship—that if money, money alone would make you happy, you should have it heaped on you. If you want it, Mr. Gresham, you shall have it."

"I have never thought of your money," said Frank, surlily.

"But it grieves me," continued she, "it does grieve me, to think that you, you, you—so young, so gay, so bright—that you should have looked for it in this way. From others I have taken it just as the wind that whistles;" and now two big slow tears escaped from her eyes, and would have rolled down her rosy cheeks, were it not that she brushed them off with the back of her hand.

"You have utterly mistaken me, Miss Dunstable," said Frank.

"If I have, I will humbly beg your pardon," said she. "But—but—but—"

"You have; indeed you have."

"How can I have mistaken you? Were you not about to say that you loved me; to talk absolute nonsense; to make me an offer? If you were not, if I have mistaken you indeed, I will beg your pardon."

Frank had nothing further to say in his own defence. He

had not wanted Miss Dunstable's money; that was true; but he could not deny that he had been about to talk that absolute nonsense of which she spoke with so much scorn.

"You would almost make me think that there are none honest in this fashionable world of yours. I well know why Lady de Courcy has had me here: how could I help knowing it? She has been so foolish in her plans that ten times a day she has told her own secret. But I have said to myself twenty times, that if she were crafty you were honest."

"And am I dishonest?"

"I have laughed in my sleeve to see how she played her game, and to hear others around playing theirs; all of them thinking that they could get the money of the poor fool who had come at their beck and call; but I was able to laugh at them as long as I thought that I had one true friend to laugh with me. But one cannot laugh with all the world against one."

"I am not against you, Miss Dunstable."

"Sell yourself for money! why, if I were a man I would not sell one jot of liberty for mountains of gold. What! tie myself in the heyday of my youth to a person I could never love, for a price! perjure myself, destroy myself—and not only myself, but her also, in order that I might live idly! Oh, heavens! Mr. Gresham! can it be that the words of such a woman as your aunt have sunk so deeply in your heart; have blackened you so foully as to make you think of such vile folly as this? Have you forgotten your soul, your spirit, your man's energy, the treasure of your heart? And you, so young! For shame, Mr. Gresham! for shame—for shame!"

Frank found the task before him by no means an easy one. He had to make Miss Dunstable understand that he had never had the slightest idea of marrying her, and that he had made love to her merely with the object of keeping his hand in for the work as it were; with that object, and the other equally laudable one of interfering with his cousin George.

And yet there was nothing for him but to get through this task as best he might. He was goaded to it by the accusations which Miss Dunstable brought against him; and he began to feel, that though her invectives against him might be bitter when he had told the truth, they could not be so bitter as those she now kept hinting at him under her mistaken impression as to his views. He had never had any strong propensity for money-hunting; but now that offence appeared in his eyes abominable, unmanly, and disgusting. Any imputation would be better than that.

"Miss Dunstable, I never for a moment thought of doing what you accuse me of; on my honour, I never did. I have been very foolish—very wrong—idiotic, I believe; but I have never intended that."

"Then, Mr. Gresham, what did you intend?"

This was rather a difficult question to answer; and Frank was not very quick in attempting it. "I know you will not forgive me," he said at last: "and, indeed, I do not see how you can. I don't know how it came about; but this is certain, Miss Dunstable, I have never for a moment thought about your fortune; that is, thought about it in the way of coveting it."

"You never thought of making me your wife, then?"

"Never," said Frank, looking boldly into her face.

"You never intended really to propose to go with me to the altar, and then make yourself rich by one great perjury?"

"Never for a moment," said he.

"You have never gloated over me as the bird of prey gloats over the poor beast that is soon to become carrion beneath its claws? You have not counted me out as equal to so much land, and calculated on me as a balance at your banker's? Ah! Mr. Gresham," she continued, seeing that he stared as though struck almost with awe by her strong language; "you little guess what a woman situated as I am has to suffer."

"I have behaved badly to you, Miss Dunstable, and I

beg your pardon; but I have never thought of your money."

"Then we will be friends again, Mr. Gresham, won't we? It is so nice to have a friend like you. There, I think I understand it now; you need not tell me."

"It was half by way of making a fool of my aunt," said Frank, in an apologetic tone.

"There is merit in that, at any rate," said Miss Dunstable. "I understand it all now; you thought to make a fool of me in real earnest. Well, I can forgive that; at any rate it is not mean."

It may be, that Miss Dunstable did not feel much acute anger at finding that this young man had addressed her with words of love in the course of an ordinary flirtation, although that flirtation had been unmeaning and silly. This was not the offence against which her heart and breast had found peculiar cause to arm itself; this was not the injury from which she had hitherto experienced suffering.

At any rate, she and Frank again became friends, and, before the evening was over, they perfectly understood each other. Twice during this long *tête-à-tête* Lady de Courcy came into the room to see how things were going on, and twice she went out almost unnoticed. It was quite clear to her that something uncommon had taken place, was taking place, or would take place; and that should this be for weal or for woe, no good could now come from her interference. On each occasion, therefore, she smiled sweetly on the pair of turtle-doves, and glided out of the room quietly as she had glided into it.

But at last it became necessary to disturb them; for the world had gone to bed. Frank, in the meantime, had told to Miss Dunstable all his love for Mary Thorne, and Miss Dunstable had enjoined him to be true to his vows. To her eyes there was something of heavenly beauty in young, true love—of beauty that was heavenly because it had been unknown to her.

"Mind you let me hear, Mr. Gresham," said she.

"Mind you do; and, Mr. Gresham, never, never forget her for one moment; not for one moment, Mr. Gresham."

Frank was about to swear that he never would—— again, when the countess, for the third time, sailed into the room.

"Young people," said she, "do you know what o'clock it is?"

"Dear me, Lady de Courcy, I declare it is past twelve; I really am ashamed of myself. How glad you will be to get rid of me to-morrow."

"No, no, indeed we shan't; shall we, Frank?" and so Miss Dunstable passed out.

Then once again the aunt tapped her nephew with her fan. It was the last time in her life that she did so. He looked up in her face, and his look was enough to tell her that the acres of Greshamsbury were not to be reclaimed by the ointment of Lebanon.

Nothing further on the subject was said. On the following morning Miss Dunstable took her departure, not much heeding the rather cold words of farewell which her hostess gave her; and on the following day Frank started for Greshamsbury.

CHAPTER XXI

Mr. Moffat Falls into Trouble

WE will now, with the reader's kind permission, skip over some months in our narrative. Frank returned from Courcy Castle to Greshamsbury, and having communicated to his mother—much in the same manner as he had to the countess—the fact that his mission had been unsuccessful, he went up after a day or two to Cambridge. During his short stay at Greshamsbury he did not even catch a glimpse of Mary. He asked for her, of course, and was told that it was not likely that she would be at the house just at present. He called at the doctor's but she was denied to him there: "she was out," Janet said, "probably with Miss Oriel." He went to the parsonage and found Miss Oriel at home; but Mary had not been seen that morning. He then returned to the house; and, having come to the conclusion that she had not thus vanished into air, otherwise than by preconcerted arrangement, he boldly taxed Beatrice on the subject.

Beatrice looked very demure; declared that no one in the house had quarrelled with Mary; confessed that it had been thought prudent that she should for a while stay away from Greshamsbury; and, of course, ended by telling her brother everything, including all the scenes that had passed between Mary and herself.

"It is out of the question your thinking of marrying her, Frank," said she. "You must know that nobody feels it more strongly than poor Mary herself;" and Beatrice looked the very personification of domestic prudence.

"I know nothing of the kind," said he, with the headlong imperative air that was usual with him in discussing matters with his sisters. "I know nothing of the kind. Of course I cannot say what Mary's feelings may be: a pretty life she must have had of it among you. But you may be

sure of this, Beatrice, and so may my mother, that nothing on earth shall make me give her up—nothing." And Frank, as he made the protestation, strengthened his own resolution by thinking of all the counsel that Miss Dunstable had given him.

The brother and sister could hardly agree, as Beatrice was dead against the match. Not that she would not have liked Mary Thorne for a sister-in-law, but that she shared to a certain degree the feeling which was now common to all the Greshams—that Frank must marry money. It seemed, at any rate, to be imperative that he should either do that or not marry at all. Poor Beatrice was not very mercenary in her views; she had no wish to sacrifice her brother to any Miss Dunstable; but yet she felt, as they all felt—Mary Thorne included—that such a match as that, of the young heir with the doctor's niece, was not to be thought of; not to be spoken of as a thing that was in any way possible. Therefore, Beatrice, though she was Mary's great friend, though she was her brother's favourite sister, could give Frank no encouragement. Poor Frank! circumstances had made but one bride possible to him: he must marry money.

His mother said nothing to him on the subject: when she learnt that the affair with Miss Dunstable was not to come off, she merely remarked that it would perhaps be best for him to return to Cambridge as soon as possible. Had she spoken her mind out, she would probably have also advised him to remain there as long as possible. The countess had not omitted to write to her when Frank left Courcy Castle; and the countess's letter certainly made the anxious mother think that her son's education had hardly yet been completed. With this secondary object, but with that of keeping him out of the way of Mary Thorne in the first place, Lady Arabella was now quite satisfied that her son should enjoy such advantages as an education completed at the university might give him. With his father, Frank had a long conversation; but, alas! the gist of his father's

conversation was this, that it behoved him, Frank, to marry money. The father, however, did not put it to him in the cold, callous way in which his lady-aunt had done, and his lady-mother. He did not bid him go and sell himself to the first female he could find possessed of wealth. It was with inward self-reproaches, and true grief of spirit, that the father told the son that it was not possible for him to do as those may do who are born really rich, or really poor.

"If you marry a girl without a fortune, Frank, how are you to live?" the father asked, after having confessed how deeply he himself had injured his own heir.

"I don't care about money, sir," said Frank. "I shall be just as happy as if Boxall Hill had never been sold. I don't care a straw about that sort of thing."

"Ah! my boy; but you will care: you will soon find that you do care."

"Let me go into some profession. Let me go to the bar. I am sure I could earn my own living. Earn it! of course I could—why not I as well as all others? I should like of all things to be a barrister."

There was much more of the same kind, in which Frank said all that he could think of to lessen his father's regrets. In their conversation not a word was spoken about Mary Thorne. Frank was not aware whether or no his father had been told of the great family danger which was dreaded in that quarter. That he had been told, we may surmise, as Lady Arabella was not wont to confine the family dangers to her own bosom. Moreover, Mary's presence had, of course, been missed. The truth was, that the squire had been told, with great bitterness, of what had come to pass, and all the evil had been laid at his door. He it had been who had encouraged Mary to be regarded almost as a daughter of the house of Greshamsbury: he it was who taught that odious doctor—odious in all but his aptitude for good doctoring—to think himself a fit match for the aristocracy of the county. It had been his fault, this great necessity that Frank should marry money; and now

it was his fault that Frank absolutely was talking of marrying a pauper.

By no means in quiescence did the squire hear these charges brought against him. The Lady Arabella, in each attack, got quite as much as she gave, and, at last, was driven to retreat in a state of headache, which she declared to be chronic; and which, so she assured her daughter Augusta, must prevent her from having any more lengthened conversations with her lord; at any rate for the next three months. But though the squire may be said to have come off on the whole as victor in these combats, they did not perhaps have, on that account, the less effect upon him. He knew it was true that he had done much towards ruining his son; and he also could think of no other remedy than matrimony. It was Frank's doom, pronounced even by the voice of his father, that he must marry money.

And so Frank went off again to Cambridge, feeling himself, as he went, to be a much lesser man in Greshamsbury estimation than he had been some two months earlier, when his birthday had been celebrated. Once during his short stay at Greshamsbury he had seen the doctor; but the meeting had been anything but pleasant. He had been afraid to ask after Mary; and the doctor had been too diffident of himself to speak of her. They had met casually on the road, and, though each in his heart loved the other, the meeting had been anything but pleasant.

And so Frank went back to Cambridge; and, as he did so, he stoutly resolved that nothing should make him untrue to Mary Thorne. "Beatrice," said he, on the morning he went away, when she came into his room to superintend his packing—"Beatrice, if she ever talks about me——"

"Oh, Frank, my darling Frank, don't think of it—it is madness; she knows it is madness."

"Never mind: if she ever talks about me, tell her that the last word I said was, that I would never forget her. She can do as she likes."

Beatrice made no promise, never hinted that she would give the message; but it may be taken for granted that she had not been long in company with Mary Thorne before she did give it.

And then there were other troubles at Greshamsbury. It had been decided that Augusta's marriage was to take place in September; but Mr. Moffat had, unfortunately, been obliged to postpone the happy day. He himself had told Augusta—not, of course, without protestations as to his regret, and had written to this effect to Mr. Gresham. "Electioneering matters, and other troubles had," he said, "made this peculiarly painful postponement absolutely necessary."

Augusta seemed to bear her misfortune with more equanimity than is, we believe, usual with young ladies under such circumstances. She spoke of it to her mother in a very matter of fact way, and seemed almost contented at the idea of remaining at Greshamsbury till February; which was the time now named for the marriage. But Lady Arabella was not equally well satisfied, nor was the squire.

"I half believe that fellow is not honest," he had once said out loud before Frank, and thus set Frank a-thinking of what dishonesty in the matter it was probable that Mr. Moffat might be guilty, and what would be the fitting punishment for such a crime. Nor did he think on the subject in vain; especially after a conference on the matter which he had with his friend, Harry Baker. This conference took place during the Christmas vacation.

It should be mentioned, that the time spent by Frank at Courcy Castle had not done much to assist him in his views as to an early degree, and that it had at last been settled that he should stay at Cambridge another year. When he came home at Christmas he found that the house was not peculiarly lively. Mary was absent on a visit with Miss Oriel. Both these young ladies were staying with Miss Oriel's aunt, in the neighbourhood of London; and

Frank soon learnt that there was no chance that either of them would be home before his return. No message had been left for him by Mary—none at least had been left with Beatrice; and he began in his heart to accuse her of coldness and perfidy; not, certainly, with much justice, seeing that she had never given him the slightest encouragement.

The absence of Patience Oriel added to the dullness of the place. It was certainly hard upon Frank that all the attraction of the village should be removed to make way and prepare for his return—harder, perhaps, on them; for, to tell the truth, Miss Oriel's visit had been entirely planned to enable her to give Mary a comfortable way of leaving Greshamsbury during the time that Frank should remain at home. Frank thought himself cruelly used. But what did Mr. Oriel think when doomed to eat his Christmas pudding alone, because the young squire would be unreasonable in his love? What did the doctor think, as he sat solitary by his deserted hearth—the doctor who no longer permitted himself to enjoy the comforts of the Greshamsbury dining-table? Frank hinted and grumbled; talked of the determined constancy of his love to Beatrice, and occasionally consoled himself by a stray smile from some of the neighbouring belles. The black horse was made perfect; the old gray pony was by no means discarded; and much that was satisfactory was done in the sporting line. But still the house was dull, and Frank felt that he was the cause of its being so. Of the doctor he saw but little: he never came to Greshamsbury unless to see Lady Arabella as doctor, or to be closeted with the squire. There were no social evenings with him; no animated confabulations at the doctor's house; no discourses between them, as there had wont to be, about the merits of the different covers, and the capacities of the different hounds. These were dull days on the whole for Frank; and sad enough, we may say, for our friend the doctor.

In February, Frank again went back to college; having

settled with Harry Baker certain affairs which weighed on his mind. He went back to Cambridge, promising to be home on the 20th of the month, so as to be present at his sister's wedding. A cold and chilling time had been named for these hymeneal joys, but one not altogether unsuited to the feelings of the happy pair. February is certainly not a warm month; but with the rich it is generally a cosy, comfortable time. Good fires, winter cheer, groaning tables, and warm blankets, make a fictitious summer, which, to some tastes, is more delightful than the long days and the hot sun. And some marriages are especially winter matches. They depend for their charm on the same substantial attractions: instead of heart beating to heart in sympathetic unison, purse chinks to purse. The rich new furniture of the new abode is looked to instead of the rapture of a pure embrace. The new carriage is depended on rather than the new heart's companion; and the first bright gloss, prepared by the upholsterer's hands, stands in lieu of the rosy tints which young Love lends to his true votaries.

Mr. Moffat had not spent his Christmas at Greshamsbury. That eternal election petition, those eternal lawyers, the eternal care of his well-managed wealth, forbade him the enjoyment of any such pleasures. He could not come to Greshamsbury for Christmas, nor yet for the festivities of the new year; but now and then he wrote prettily-worded notes, sending occasionally a silver-gilt pencil-case, or a small brooch, and informed Lady Arabella that he looked forward to the 20th of February with great satisfaction. But, in the meanwhile, the squire became anxious, and at last went up to London; and Frank, who was at Cambridge, bought the heaviest cutting-whip to be found in that town, and wrote a confidential letter to Harry Baker.

Poor Mr. Moffat! It is well known that none but the brave deserve the fair; but thou, without much excuse for bravery, had secured for thyself one who, at any rate, was fair enough for thee. Would it not have been well hadst

thou looked into thyself to see what real bravery might be in thee, before thou hadst prepared to desert this fair one thou hadst already won? That last achievement, one may say, did require some special courage.

Poor Mr. Moffat! It is wonderful that as he sat in that gig, going to Gatherum Castle, planning how he would be off with Miss Gresham and afterwards on with Miss Dunstable, it is wonderful that he should not then have cast his eye behind him, and looked at that stalwart pair of shoulders which were so close to his own back. As he afterwards pondered on his scheme while sipping the duke's claret, it is odd that he should not have observed the fiery pride of purpose and power of wrath which was so plainly written on that young man's brow; or, when he matured, and finished, and carried out his purpose, that he did not think of that keen grasp which had already squeezed his own hand with somewhat too warm a vigour even in the way of friendship.

Poor Mr. Moffat! it is probable that he forgot to think of Frank at all as connected with his promised bride; it is probable that he looked forward only to the squire's violence and the enmity of the house of Courcy; and that he found from inquiry at his heart's pulses that he was man enough to meet these. Could he have guessed what a whip Frank Gresham would have bought at Cambridge—could he have divined what a letter would have been written to Harry Baker—it is probable, nay, we think we may say certain, that Miss Gresham would have become Mrs. Moffat.

Miss Gresham, however, never did become Mrs. Moffat. About two days after Frank's departure for Cambridge—it is just possible that Mr. Moffat was so prudent as to make himself aware of the fact—but just two days after Frank's departure, a very long, elaborate, and clearly explanatory letter was received at Greshamsbury. Mr. Moffat was quite sure that Miss Gresham and her very excellent parents would do him the justice to believe that he

was not actuated, etc., etc., etc. The long and the short of this was, that Mr. Moffat signified his intention of breaking off the match without offering any intelligible reason.

Augusta again bore her disappointment well: not, indeed, without sorrow and heartache, and inward, hidden tears; but still well. She neither raved, nor fainted, nor walked about by moonlight alone. She wrote no poetry, and never once thought of suicide. When, indeed, she remembered the rosy-tinted lining, the unfathomable softness of that Long-acre carriage, her spirit did for one moment give way; but, on the whole, she bore it as a strong-minded woman and a De Courcy should do.

But both Lady Arabella and the squire were greatly vexed. The former had made the match, and the latter, having consented to it, had incurred deeper responsibilities to enable him to bring it about. The money which was to have been given to Mr. Moffat was still to the fore: but, alas! how much, how much that he could ill spare, had been thrown away on bridal preparations! It is, moreover, an unpleasant thing for a gentleman to have his daughter jilted; perhaps peculiarly so to have her jilted by a tailor's son!

Lady Arabella's woe was really piteous. It seemed to her as though cruel fate was heaping misery after misery upon the wretched house of Greshamsbury. A few weeks since things were going on so well with her. Frank then was all but the accepted husband of almost untold wealth—so, at least, she was informed by her sister-in-law—whereas, Augusta was the accepted wife of wealth, not indeed untold, but of dimensions quite sufficiently respectable to cause much joy in the telling. Where now were her golden hopes? Where now the splendid future of her poor duped children? Augusta was left to pine alone; and Frank, in still worse plight, insisted on maintaining his love for a bastard and a pauper.

For Frank's affair she had received some poor consolation by laying all the blame on the squire's shoulders. What

she had then said was now repaid to her with interest; for not only had she been the maker of Augusta's match, but she had boasted of the deed with all a mother's pride.

It was from Beatrice that Frank had obtained his tidings. This last resolve on the part of Mr. Moffat had not altogether been unsuspected by some of the Greshams, though altogether unsuspected by the Lady Arabella. Frank had spoken of it as a possibility to Beatrice, and was not quite unprepared when the information reached him. He consequently bought his big cutting-whip, and wrote his confidential letter to Harry Baker.

On the following day Frank and Harry might have been seen, with their heads nearly close together, leaning over one of the tables in the large breakfast-room at the Tavistock Hotel in Covent Garden. The ominous whip, to the handle of which Frank had already made his hand well accustomed, was lying on the table between them; and ever and anon Harry Baker would take it up and feel its weight approvingly. Oh, Mr. Moffat! poor Mr. Moffat! go not out into the fashionable world to-day; above all, go not to that club of thine in Pall Mall; but, oh! especially go not there, as is thy wont to do, at three o'clock in the afternoon!

With much care did those two young generals lay their plans of attack. Let it not for a moment be thought that it was ever in the minds of either of them that two men should attack one. But it was thought that Mr. Moffat might be rather coy in coming out from his seclusion to meet the proffered hand of his once intended brother-in-law when he should see that hand was armed with a heavy whip. Baker, therefore, was content to act as a decoy duck, and remarked that he might no doubt also make himself useful in restraining the public mercy, and, probably, in controlling the interference of policemen.

"It will be deuced hard if I can't get five or six shies at him," said Frank, again clutching his weapon almost spasmodically. Oh, Mr. Moffat! five or six shies with such

a whip, and such an arm! For myself, I would sooner join in a second Balaclava gallop than encounter it.

At ten minutes before four these two heroes might be seen walking up Pall Mall, towards the —— Club. Young Baker walked with an eager disengaged air. Mr. Moffat did not know his appearance; he had, therefore, no anxiety to pass along unnoticed. But Frank had in some mysterious way drawn his hat very far over his forehead, and had buttoned his shooting-coat up round his chin. Harry had recommended to him a great-coat, in order that he might the better conceal his face; but Frank had found that the great-coat was an encumbrance to his arm. He put it on; and when thus clothed he had tried the whip, he found that he cut the air with much less potency than in the lighter garment. He contented himself, therefore, with looking down on the pavement as he walked along, letting the long point of the whip stick up from his pocket, and flattering himself that even Mr. Moffat would not recognise him at the first glance. Poor Mr. Moffat! If he had but had the chance!

And now, having arrived at the front of the club, the two friends for a moment separate: Frank remains standing on the pavement, under the shade of the high stone area-railing, while Harry jauntily skips up three steps at a time, and with a very civil word of inquiry of the hall-porter, sends in his card to Mr. Moffat—

"MR. HENRY BAKER."

Mr. Moffat, never having heard of such a gentleman in his life, unwittingly comes out into the hall, and Harry, with his sweetest smile, addresses him.

Now the plan of the campaign had been settled in this wise: Baker was to send into the club for Mr. Moffat, and invite that gentleman down into the street. It was probable that the invitation might be declined; and it had been calculated in such case that the two gentlemen would retire for parley into the strangers' room, which was known to

be immediately opposite the hall-door. Frank was to keep his eye on the portals, and if he found that Mr. Moffat did not appear as readily as might be desired, he also was to ascend the steps and hurry into the strangers' room. Then, whether he met Mr. Moffat there or elsewhere, or wherever he might meet him, he was to greet him with all the friendly vigour in his power, while Harry disposed of the club-porters.

But fortune, who ever favours the brave, specially favoured Frank Gresham on this occasion. Just as Harry Baker had put his card into the servant's hand, Mr. Moffat with his hat on, prepared for the street, appeared in the hall; Mr. Baker addressed him with his sweetest smile, and begged the pleasure of saying a word or two as they descended into the street. Had not Mr. Moffat been going thither it would have been very improbable that he should have done so at Harry's instance. But, as it was, he merely looked rather solemn at his visitor—it was his wont to look solemn—and continued the descent of the steps.

Frank, his heart leaping the while, saw his prey, and retreated two steps behind the area-railing, the dread weapon already well poised in his hand. Oh! Mr. Moffat! Mr. Moffat! if there be any goddess to interfere in thy favour, let her come forward now without delay; let her now bear thee off on a cloud if there be one to whom thou art sufficiently dear! But there is no such goddess.

Harry smiled blandly till they were well on the pavement, saying some nothing, and keeping the victim's face averted from the avenging angel; and then, when the raised hand was sufficiently nigh, he withdrew two steps towards the nearest lamp-post. Not for him was the honour of the interview;—unless, indeed, succouring policemen might give occasion for some gleam of glory.

But succouring policemen were no more to be come by than goddesses. Where were ye, men, when that savage whip fell about the ears of the poor ex-legislator? In Scotland-yard, sitting dozing on your benches, or talking

soft nothings to the housemaids round the corner; for ye were not walking on your beats, nor standing at coign of vantage, to watch the tumults of the day. But had ye been there what could ye have done? Had Sir Richard himself been on the spot Frank Gresham would still, we may say, have had his five shies at that unfortunate one.

When Harry Baker quickly seceded from the way, Mr. Moffat at once saw his fate before him. His hair doubtless stood on end, and his voice refused to give the loud screech with which he sought to invoke the club. An ashy paleness suffused his cheeks, and his tottering steps were unable to bear him away in flight. Once, and twice, the cutting-whip came well down across his back. Had he been wise enough to stand still and take his thrashing in that attitude, it would have been well for him. But men so circumstanced have never such prudence. After two blows he made a dash at the steps, thinking to get back into the club; but Harry, who had by no means reclined in idleness against the lamp-post, here stopped him: "You had better go back into the street," said Harry; "indeed you had," giving him a shove from off the second step.

Then of course Frank could not do other than hit him anywhere. When a gentleman is dancing about with much energy it is hardly possible to strike him fairly on his back. The blows, therefore, came now on his legs and now on his head; and Frank unfortunately got more than his five or six shies before he was interrupted.

The interruption however came, all too soon for Frank's idea of justice. Though there be no policemen to take part in a London row, there are always others ready enough to do so; amateur policemen, who generally sympathize with the wrong side, and, in nine cases out of ten, expend their generous energy in protecting thieves and pickpockets. When it was seen with what tremendous ardour that dread weapon fell about the ears of the poor undefended gentleman, interference there was at last, in spite of Harry Baker's best endeavours, and loudest protestations.

"Do not interrupt them, sir," said he; "pray do not. It is a family affair, and they will neither of them like it."

In the teeth, however, of these assurances, rude people did interfere, and after some nine or ten shies Frank found himself encompassed by the arms, and encumbered by the weight, of a very stout gentleman, who hung affectionately about his neck and shoulders; whereas, Mr. Moffat was already receiving consolation from two motherly females, sitting in a state of syncope on the good-natured knees of a fishmonger's apprentice.

Frank was thoroughly out of breath; nothing came from his lips but half-muttered expletives and unintelligible denunciations of the iniquity of his foe. But still he struggled to be at him again. We all know how dangerous is the taste of blood; how cruelty will become a custom even with the most tender-hearted. Frank felt that he had hardly yet fleshed his virgin lash: he thought, almost with despair, that he had not yet at all succeeded as became a man and a brother; his memory told him of but one or two slight touches that had gone well home to the offender. He made a desperate effort to throw off that incubus round his neck and rush again to the combat.

"Harry—Harry; don't let him go—don't let him go," he barely articulated.

"Do you want to murder the man, sir; to murder him?" said the stout gentleman over his shoulder, speaking solemnly into his very ear.

"I don't care," said Frank, struggling manfully but uselessly. "Let me out, I say; I don't care—don't let him go, Harry, whatever you do."

"He has got it pretty tidily," said Harry; "I think that will perhaps do for the present."

By this time there was a considerable concourse. The club steps were crowded with the members; among whom there were many of Mr. Moffat's acquaintance. Policemen also now flocked up, and the question arose as to what should be done with the originators of the affray. Frank and

Harry found that they were to consider themselves as under a gentle arrest, and Mr. Moffat, in a fainting state, was carried into the interior of the club.

Frank, in his innocence, had intended to have celebrated this little affair when it was over by a slight repast and a bottle of claret with his friend, and then to have gone back to Cambridge by the mail train. He found, however, that his schemes in this respect were frustrated. He had to get bail to attend at Marlborough-street police-office should he be wanted within the next two or three days; and was given to understand that he would be under the eye of the police, at any rate until Mr. Moffat should be out of danger.

"Out of danger!" said Frank to his friend with a startled look. "Why I hardly got at him." Nevertheless, they did have their slight repast, and also their bottle of claret.

On the second morning after this occurrence, Frank was again sitting in that public room at the Tavistock and Harry was again sitting opposite to him. The whip was not now so conspicuously produced between them, having been carefully packed up and put away among Frank's other travelling properties. They were so sitting, rather glum, when the door swung open, and a heavy, quick step was heard advancing towards them. It was the squire; whose arrival there had been momentarily expected.

"Frank," said he—"Frank, what on earth is all this?" and as he spoke he stretched out both his hands, the right to his son and the left to his friend.

"He has given a blackguard a licking, that is all," said Harry.

Frank felt that his hand was held with a peculiarly warm grasp; and he could not but think that his father's face, raised though his eyebrows were—though there was on it an intended expression of amazement and, perhaps, regret —nevertheless, he could not but think that his father's face looked kindly at him.

"God bless my soul, my dear boy! what have you done to the man?"

"He's not a ha'porth the worse, sir," said Frank, still holding his father's hand.

"Oh, isn't he!" said Harry, shrugging his shoulders. "He must be made of some very tough article then."

"But, my dear boys, I hope there's no danger. I do hope there's no danger."

"Danger!" said Frank, who could not yet induce himself to believe that he had been allowed a fair chance with Mr. Moffat.

"Oh, Frank! Frank! how could you be so rash? In the middle of Pall Mall, too. Well! well! well! All the women down at Greshamsbury will have it that you have killed him."

"I almost wish I had," said Frank.

"Oh, Frank, Frank! But now tell me—"

And then the father sat well pleased while he heard, chiefly from Harry Baker, the full story of his son's prowess. And then they did not separate without another slight repast and another bottle of claret.

Mr. Moffat retired into the country for a while, and then went abroad; having doubtless learnt that the petition was not likely to give him a seat for the city of Barchester. And this was the end of the wooing with Miss Gresham.

CHAPTER XXII

Sir Roger is Unseated

AFTER THIS, little occurred at Greshamsbury, or among Greshamsbury people, which it will be necessary for us to record. Some notice was, of course, taken of Frank's prolonged absence from his college; and tidings, perhaps exaggerated tidings, of what had happened in Pall Mall were not slow to reach the High-street of Cambridge. But that affair was gradually hushed up; and Frank went on with his studies.

He went back to his studies: it then being an understood arrangement between him and his father that he should not return to Greshamsbury till the summer vacation. On this occasion there had been a similar arrangement between the squire and Lady Arabella. They both wished to keep their son away from Miss Thorne; and both calculated, that at his age and with his disposition, it was not probable that any passion would last out a six-months' absence. "And when the summer comes it will be an excellent opportunity for us to go abroad," said Lady Arabella. "Poor Augusta will require some change to renovate her spirits."

To this last proposition the squire did not assent. It was, however, allowed to pass over; and this much was fixed, that Frank was not to return home till Midsummer.

It will be remembered that Sir Roger Scatcherd had been elected as sitting member for the city of Barchester; but it will also be remembered that a petition against his return was threatened. Had that petition depended solely on Mr. Moffat, Sir Roger's seat no doubt would have been saved by Frank Gresham's cutting-whip. But such was not the case. Mr. Moffat had been put forward by the De Courcy interest; and that noble family with its dependents

was not to go to the wall because Mr. Moffat had had a thrashing. No; the petition was to go on; and Mr. Nearthewinde declared, that no petition in his hands had half so good a chance of success. "Chance, no, but certainty!" said Mr. Nearthewinde; for Mr. Nearthewinde had learnt something with reference to the honest publican and the payment of his little bill.

The petition was presented and duly backed; the recognizances were signed, and all the proper formalities formally executed; and Sir Roger found that his seat was in jeopardy. His return had been a great triumph to him; and, unfortunately, he had celebrated that triumph as he had been in the habit of celebrating most of the very triumphant occasions of his life. Though he was then hardly yet recovered from the effects of his last attack, he indulged in another violent drinking bout; and, strange to say, did so without any immediate, visible, bad effect.

In February he took his seat amidst the warm congratulations of all men of his own class, and early in the month of April his case came on for trial. Every kind of electioneering sin known to the electioneering world was brought to his charge: he was accused of falseness, dishonesty, and bribery of every sort: he had, it was said in the paper of indictment, bought votes, obtained them by treating, carried them off by violence, conquered them by strong drink, polled them twice over, counted those of dead men, stolen them, forged them, and created them by every possible, fictitious contrivance: there was no description of wickedness appertaining to the task of procuring votes of which Sir Roger had not been guilty, either by himself or by his agents. He was quite horror-struck at the list of his own enormities. But he was somewhat comforted when Mr. Closerstil told him that the meaning of it all was that Mr. Romer, the barrister, had paid a former bill due to Mr. Reddypalm, the publican.

"I fear he was indiscreet, Sir Roger! I really fear he was. Those young men always are. Being energetic, they work

like horses. But what's the use of energy without discretion, Sir Roger?"

"But, Mr. Closerstil, I knew nothing about it from first to last."

"The agency can be proved, Sir Roger," said Mr. Closerstil, shaking his head. And then there was nothing further to be said on the matter.

In these days of snow-white purity all political delinquency is abominable in the eyes of British politicians; but no delinquency is so abominable as that of venality at elections. The sin of bribery is damnable. It is the one sin for which, in the House of Commons, there can be no forgiveness. When discovered, it should render the culprit liable to political death, without hope of pardon. It is treason against a higher throne than that on which the Queen sits. It is a heresy which requires an *auto-da-fé*. It is pollution to the whole house, which can only be cleansed by a great sacrifice. Anathema—maranatha! out with it from amongst us, even though the half of our heart's blood be poured forth in the conflict! Out with it, and for ever!

Such is the language of patriotic members with regard to bribery; and doubtless, if sincere, they are in the right. It is a bad thing, certainly, that a rich man should buy votes; bad also that a poor man should sell them. By all means let us repudiate such a system with heartfelt disgust.

With heartfelt disgust, if we can do so, by all means; but not with disgust pretended only and not felt in the heart at all. The laws against bribery at elections are now so stringent that an unfortunate candidate may easily become guilty, even though actuated by the purest intentions. But not the less on that account does any gentleman, ambitious of the honour of serving his country in parliament, think it necessary as a preliminary measure to provide a round sum of money at his banker's. A candidate must pay for no treating, no refreshments, no band of music; he must give neither ribbons to the girls nor ale to the men. If a huzza be uttered in his favour it is at his peril; it may be necessary

for him to prove before a committee that it was the spontaneous result of British feeling in his favour, and not the purchased result of British beer. He cannot safely ask any one to share his hotel dinner. Bribery hides itself now in the most impalpable shapes, and may be effected by the offer of a glass of sherry. But not the less on this account does a poor man find that he is quite unable to overcome the difficulties of a contested election.

We strain at our gnats with a vengeance, but we swallow our camels with ease. For what purpose is it that we employ those peculiarly safe men of business—Messrs. Nearthewinde and Closerstil—when we wish to win our path through all obstacles into that sacred recess, if all be so open, all so easy, all so much above board? Alas! the money is still necessary, is still prepared, or at any rate expended. The poor candidate of course knows nothing of the matter till the attorney's bill is laid before him, when all danger of petitions has passed away. He little dreamed till then, not he, that there had been banquetings and junketings, secret doings and deep drinkings at his expense. Poor candidate! Poor member! Who was so ignorant as he! 'Tis true he has paid such bills before; but 'tis equally true that he specially begged his managing friend, Mr. Nearthewinde, to be very careful that all was done according to law! He pays the bill, however, and on the next election will again employ Mr. Nearthewinde.

Now and again, at rare intervals, some glimpse into the inner sanctuary does reach the eyes of ordinary mortal men without; some slight accidental peep into those mysteries from whence all corruption has been so thoroughly expelled! and then, how delightfully refreshing is the sight, when, perhaps, some ex-member, hurled from his paradise like a fallen peri, reveals the secret of that pure heaven, and, in the agony of his despair, tells us all that it cost him to sit for that borough of his through those few halcyon years!

But Mr. Nearthewinde is a safe man, and easy to be employed with but little danger. All these stringent bribery

laws only enhance the value of such very safe men as Mr. Nearthewinde. To him, stringent laws against bribery are the strongest assurance of valuable employment. Were these laws of a nature to be evaded with ease, any indifferent attorney might manage a candidate's affairs and enable him to take his seat with security.

It would have been well for Sir Roger if he had trusted solely to Mr. Closerstil; well also for Mr. Romer had he never fished in those troubled waters. In due process of time the hearing of the petition came on, and then who so happy, sitting at his ease at his London inn, blowing his cloud from a long pipe, with measureless content, as Mr. Reddypalm? Mr. Reddypalm was the one great man of that contest. All depended on Mr. Reddypalm; and well he did his duty.

The result of the petition was declared by the committee to be as follows:—that Sir Roger's election was null and void—that the election altogether was null and void—that Sir Roger had, by his agent, been guilty of bribery in obtaining a vote by the payment of a bill alleged to have been previously refused payment, that Sir Roger himself knew nothing about it—this is always a matter of course; but that Sir Roger's agent, Mr. Romer, had been wittingly guilty of bribery with reference to the transaction above described. Poor Sir Roger! Poor Mr. Romer!

Poor Mr. Romer indeed! His fate was perhaps as sad as well might be, and as foul a blot to the purism of these very pure times in which we live. Not long after those days, it so happening that some considerable amount of youthful energy and quidnunc ability were required to set litigation afloat at Hong Kong, Mr. Romer was sent thither as the fittest man for such work, with rich assurance of future guerdon. Who so happy then as Mr. Romer! But even among the pure there is room for envy and detraction. Mr. Romer had not yet ceased to wonder at new worlds, as he skimmed among the islands of that southern ocean, before the edict had gone forth for his return. There were men

sitting in that huge court of parliament on whose breasts it lay as an intolerable burden, that England should be represented among the antipodes by one who had tampered with the purity of the franchise. For them there was no rest till this great disgrace should be wiped out and atoned for. Men they were of that calibre, that the slightest reflection on them of such a stigma seemed to themselves to blacken their own character. They could not break bread with satisfaction till Mr. Romer was recalled—recalled, and of course ruined—and the minds of those just men were at peace.

To any honourable gentleman who really felt his brow suffused with a patriotic blush, as he thought of his country dishonoured by Mr. Romer's presence at Hong Kong—to any such gentleman, if any such there were, let all honour be given, even though the intensity of his purity may create amazement to our less finely organized souls. But if no such blush suffused the brow of any honourable gentleman; if Mr. Romer was recalled from quite other feelings—what then in lieu of honour shall we allot to those honourable gentlemen who were most concerned?

Sir Roger, however, lost his seat, and, after three months of the joys of legislation, found himself reduced by a terrible blow to the low level of private life.

And the blow to him was very heavy. Men but seldom tell the truth of what is in them, even to their dearest friends; they are ashamed of having feelings, or rather of showing that they are troubled by any intensity of feeling. It is the practice of the time to treat all pursuits as though they were only half important to us, as though in what we desire we were only half in earnest. To be visibly eager seems childish, and is always bad policy; and men, therefore, now-a-days, though they strive as hard as ever in the service of ambition—harder than ever in that of mammon—usually do so with a pleasant smile on, as though after all they were but amusing themselves with the little matter in hand.

Perhaps it had been so with Sir Roger in those electioneering days when he was looking for votes. At any rate, he had spoken of this seat in parliament as but a doubtful good. "He was willing, indeed, to stand, having been asked; but the thing would interfere wonderfully with his business; and then, what did he know about parliament? Nothing on earth: it was the maddest scheme, but, nevertheless, he was not going to hang back when called upon—he had always been rough and ready when wanted—and then he was now ready as ever, and rough enough too, God knows."

'Twas thus that he had spoken of his coming parliamentary honours; and men had generally taken him at his word. He had been returned, and this success had been hailed as a great thing for the cause and class to which he belonged. But men did not know that his inner heart was swelling with triumph, and that his bosom could hardly contain his pride as he reflected that the poor Barchester stonemason was now the representative in parliament of his native city. And so, when his seat was attacked, he still laughed and joked. "They were welcome to it for him," he said; "he could keep it or want it; and of the two, perhaps, the want of it would come most convenient to him. He did not exactly think that he had bribed any one; but if the bigwigs chose to say so, it was all one to him. He was rough and ready, now as ever," etc., etc.

But when the struggle came it was to him a fearful one; not the less fearful because there was no one, no not one friend in all the world, to whom he could open his mind and speak out honestly what was in his heart. To Dr. Thorne he might perhaps have done so had his intercourse with the doctor been sufficiently frequent; but it was only now and again when he was ill, or when the squire wanted to borrow money, that he saw Dr. Thorne. He had plenty of friends, heaps of friends in parliamentary sense; friends who talked about him, and lauded him at public meetings; who shook hands with him on platforms, and drank his

health at dinners; but he had no friend who could sit with him over his own hearth in true friendship, and listen to, and sympathize with, and moderate the sighings of the inner man. For him there was no sympathy; no tenderness of love; no retreat save into himself from the loud brass band of the outer world.

The blow hit him terribly hard. It did not come altogether unexpectedly, and yet, when it did come, it was all but unendurable. He had made so much of the power of walking into that august chamber, and sitting shoulder to shoulder in legislative equality with the sons of dukes and the curled darlings of the nation. Money had given him nothing, nothing but the mere feeling of brute power; with his three hundred thousand pounds he had felt himself to be no more palpably near to the goal of his ambition than when he had chipped stones for three shillings and sixpence a day. But when he was led up and introduced at that table, when he shook the old premier's hand on the floor of the House of Commons, when he heard the honourable member for Barchester alluded to in grave debate as the greatest living authority on railway matters, then, indeed, he felt that he had achieved something.

And now this cup was ravished from his lips, almost before it was tasted. When he was first told as a certainty that the decision of the committee was against him, he bore up against the misfortune like a man. He laughed heartily, and declared himself well rid of a very profitless profession; cut some little joke about Mr. Moffat and his thrashing, and left on those around him an impression that he was a man so constituted, so strong in his own resolves, so steadily pursuant of his own work, that no little contentions of this kind could affect him. Men admired his easy laughter, as, shuffling his half-crowns with both his hands in his trouser-pockets, he declared that Messrs. Romer and Reddypalm were the best friends he had known for this many a day.

But not the less did he walk out from the room in which

he was standing a broken-hearted man. Hope could not buoy him up as she may do other ex-members in similarly disagreeable circumstances. He could not afford to look forward to what further favours parliamentary future might have in store for him after a lapse of five or six years. Five or six years? Why his life was not worth four years' purchase; of that he was perfectly aware: he could not now live without the stimulus of brandy; and yet, while he took it, he knew he was killing himself. Death he did not fear; but he would fain have wished, after his life of labour, to have lived, while yet he could live, in the blaze of that high world to which for a moment he had attained.

He laughed loud and cheerily as he left his parliamentary friends, and putting himself into the train, went down to Boxall Hill. He laughed loud and cheerily; but he never laughed again. It had not been his habit to laugh much at Boxall Hill. It was there he kept his wife and Mr. Winterbones, and the brandy bottle behind his pillow. He had not often there found it necessary to assume that loud and cheery laugh.

On this occasion he was apparently well in health when he got home; but both Lady Scatcherd and Mr. Winterbones found him more than ordinarily cross. He made an affectation at sitting very hard to business, and even talked of going abroad to look at some of his foreign contracts. But even Winterbones found that his patron did not work as he had been wont to do; and at last, with some misgivings, he told Lady Scatcherd that he feared that everything was not right.

"He's always at it, my lady, always," said Mr. Winterbones.

"Is he?" said Lady Scatcherd, well understanding what Mr. Winterbones' allusion meant.

"Always, my lady. I never saw nothing like it. Now, there's me—I can always go my half-hour when I've had my drop; but he, why he don't go ten minutes not now."

This was not cheerful to Lady Scatcherd; but what was

the poor woman to do? When she spoke to him on any subject he only snarled at her; and now, that the heavy fit was on him, she did not dare even to mention the subject of his drinking. She had never known him so savage in his humour as he was now; so bearish in his habits; so little inclined to humanity; so determined to rush headlong down, with his head between his legs, into the bottomless abyss.

She thought of sending for Dr. Thorne; but she did not know under what guise to send for him, whether as doctor or as friend: under neither would he now be welcome; and she well knew that Sir Roger was not the man to accept in good part either a doctor or a friend who might be unwelcome. She knew that this husband of hers, this man who, with all his faults, was the best of her friends, whom of all she loved best—she knew that he was killing himself, and yet she could do nothing. Sir Roger was his own master and if kill himself he would, kill himself he must.

And kill himself he did. Not indeed by one sudden blow. He did not take one huge dose of his consuming poison and then fall dead upon the floor. It would perhaps have been better for himself, and better for those around him, had he done so. No; the doctors had time to congregate around his bed; Lady Scatcherd was allowed a period of nurse-tending; the sick man was able to say his last few words and bid adieu to his portion of the lower world with dying decency. As these last words will have some lasting effect upon the surviving personages of our story, the reader must be content to stand for a short while by the side of Sir Roger's sick-bed, and help us to bid him God-speed on the journey which lies before him.

CHAPTER XXIII

Retrospective

IT was declared in the early pages of this work that Dr. Thorne was to be our hero; but it would appear very much as though he had latterly been forgotten. Since that evening when he retired to rest without letting Mary share the grievous weight which was on his mind, we have neither seen nor heard aught of him.

It was then full midsummer, and it is now early spring: and during the intervening months the doctor had not had a happy time of it. On that night, as we have before told, he took his niece to his heart; but he could not then bring himself to tell her that which it was so imperative she should know. Like a coward, he would put off the evil hour till the next morning, and thus robbed himself of his night's sleep.

But when the morning came the duty could not be postponed. Lady Arabella had given him to understand that his niece would no longer be a guest at Greshamsbury; and it was quite out of the question that Mary, after this, should be allowed to put her foot within the gate of the domain without having learnt what Lady Arabella had said. So he told it her before breakfast, walking round their little garden, she with her hand in his.

He was perfectly thunderstruck by the collected—nay, cool way in which she received his tidings. She turned pale, indeed; he felt also that her hand somewhat trembled in his own, and he perceived that for a moment her voice shook; but no angry word escaped her lip, nor did she even deign to repudiate the charge which was, as it were, conveyed in Lady Arabella's request. The doctor knew, or thought he knew—nay, he did know—that Mary was wholly blameless in the matter; that she had at least given no encouragement to any love on the part of the young

heir; but, nevertheless, he had expected that she would avouch her own innocence. This, however, she by no means did.

"Lady Arabella is quite right," she said, "quite right; if she has any fear of that kind she cannot be too careful."

"She is a selfish, proud woman," said the doctor; "quite indifferent to the feelings of others; quite careless how deeply she may hurt her neighbours if, in doing so, she may possibly benefit herself."

"She will not hurt me, uncle, nor yet you. I can live without going to Greshamsbury."

"But it is not to be endured that she should dare to cast an imputation upon my darling."

"On me, uncle? She casts no imputation on me. Frank has been foolish: I have said nothing of it, for it was not worth while to trouble you. But as Lady Arabella chooses to interfere, I have no right to blame her. He has said what he should not have said; he has been foolish. Uncle, you know I could not prevent it."

"Let her send him away then, not you; let her banish him."

"Uncle, he is her son. A mother can hardly send her son away so easily: could you send me away, uncle?"

He merely answered her by twining his arm round her waist and pressing her to his side. He was well sure that she was badly treated; and yet now that she so unaccountably took Lady Arabella's part, he hardly knew how to make this out plainly to be the case.

"Besides, uncle, Greshamsbury is in a manner his own; how can he be banished from his father's house? No, uncle; there is an end of visits there. They shall find that I will not thrust myself in their way."

And then Mary, with a calm brow and steady gait, went in and made the tea.

And what might be the feelings of her heart when she so sententiously told her uncle that Frank had been foolish? She was of the same age with him; as impressible, though

more powerful in hiding such impressions, as all women should be; her heart was as warm, her blood as full of life, her innate desire for the companionship of some much-loved object as strong as his. Frank had been foolish in avowing his passion. No such folly as that could be laid at her door. But had she been proof against that other folly? Had she been able to walk heart-whole by his side while he chatted his commonplaces about love? Yes; they are commonplaces when we read of them in novels; common enough, too, to some of us when we write them; but they are by no means commonplace when first heard by a young girl in the rich, balmy fragrance of a July evening stroll.

Nor are they commonplaces when so uttered for the first or second time at least, or perhaps the third. 'Tis a pity that so heavenly a pleasure should pall upon the senses.

If it was so that Frank's folly had been listened to with a certain amount of pleasure, Mary did not even admit so much to herself. But why should it have been otherwise? Why should she have been less prone to love than he was? Had he not everything which girls do love? which girls should love? which God created noble, beautiful, all but godlike, in order that women, all but goddesslike, might love? to love thoroughly, truly, heartily, with her whole body, soul, heart, and strength! And yet we are wont to make a disgrace of it. We do so most unnaturally, most unreasonably; for we expect our daughters to get themselves married off our hands. When the period of that step comes, then love is proper enough; but up to that—before that, as regards all those preliminary passages which must, we suppose, be necessary—in all those it becomes a young lady to be icy-hearted as a river-god in winter.

"O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad!
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad!
Tho' father and mither and a' should go mad,
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad!"

That is the kind of love which a girl should feel before she puts her hand proudly in that of her lover, and consents that they two shall be made one flesh.

Mary felt no such love as this. She, too, had some inner perception of that dread destiny by which it behoved Frank Gresham to be forewarned. She, too—though she had never heard so much said in words—had an almost instinctive knowledge that his fate required him to marry money. Thinking over this in her own way, she was not slow to convince herself that it was out of the question that she should allow herself to love Frank Gresham. However well her heart might be inclined to such a feeling, it was duty to repress it. She resolved, therefore, to do so; and she sometimes flattered herself that she had kept her resolution.

These were bad times for the doctor, and bad times for Mary too. She had declared that she could live without going to Greshamsbury; but she did not find it so easy. She had been going to Greshamsbury all her life, and it was as customary with her to be there as at home. Such old customs are not broken without pain. Had she left the place it would have been far different; but, as it was, she daily passed the gates, daily saw and spoke to some of the servants, who knew her as well as they did the young ladies of the family—was in hourly contact, as it were, with Greshamsbury. It was not only that she did not go there, but that every one knew that she had suddenly discontinued doing so. Yes, she could live without going to Greshamsbury; but for some time she had but a poor life of it. She felt, nay, almost heard, that every man and woman, boy and girl, in the village was telling his and her neighbour that Mary Thorne no longer went to the house because of Lady Arabella and the young squire.

But Beatrice, of course, came to her. What was she to say to Beatrice? The truth! Nay but it is not always so easy to say the truth, even to one's dearest friends.

"But you'll come up now he has gone?" said Beatrice.

"No, indeed!" said Mary; "that would hardly be pleasant to Lady Arabella, nor to me either. No, Trichy, dearest; my visits to dear old Greshamsbury are done, done, done: perhaps in some twenty years' time I may be walking about the lawn with your brother, and discussing our childish days—that is, always, if the then Mrs. Gresham shall have invited me."

"How can Frank have been so wrong, so unkind, so cruel?" said Beatrice.

This, however, was a light in which Miss Thorne did not take any pleasure in discussing the matter. Her ideas of Frank's fault, and unkindness, and cruelty, were doubtless different from those of his sister. Such cruelty was not unnaturally excused in her eyes by many circumstances which Beatrice did not fully understand. Mary was quite ready to go hand in hand with Lady Arabella and the rest of the Greshamsbury folk in putting an end, if possible, to Frank's passion; she would give no one a right to accuse her of assisting to ruin the young heir; but she could hardly bring herself to admit that he was so very wrong—no, nor yet even so very cruel.

And then the squire came to see her, and this was a yet harder trial than the visit of Beatrice. It was so difficult for her to speak to him that she could not but wish him away; and yet, had he not come, had he altogether neglected her, she would have felt it to be unkind. She had ever been his pet, had always received kindness from him.

"I am sorry for all this, Mary; very sorry," said he, standing up, and holding both her hands in his.

"It can't be helped, sir," said she, smiling.

"I don't know," said he; "I don't know—it ought to be helped somehow—I am quite sure you have not been to blame."

"No," said she, very quietly; as though the position was one quite a matter of course. "I don't think I have been very much to blame. There will be misfortunes sometimes when nobody is to blame."

"I do not quite understand it all," said the squire; "but if Frank—"

"Oh! we will not talk about him," said she, still laughing gently.

"You can understand, Mary, how dear he must be to me; but if—"

"Mr. Gresham, I would not for worlds be the cause of any unpleasantness between you and him."

"But I cannot bear to think that we have banished you, Mary."

"It cannot be helped. Things will all come right in time."

"But you will be so lonely here."

"Oh! I shall get over that. Here, you know, Mr. Gresham, 'I am monarch of all I survey;' and there is a great deal in that."

The squire did not quite catch her meaning, but a glimmering of it did reach him. It was competent to Lady Arabella to banish her from Greshamsbury; it was within the sphere of the squire's duties to prohibit his son from an imprudent match; it was for the Greshams to guard their Greshamsbury treasure as best they could within their own territories: but let them beware that they did not attack her on hers. In obedience to the first expression of their wishes, she had submitted herself to this public mark of their disapproval because she had seen at once, with her clear intellect, that they were only doing that which her conscience must approve. Without a murmur, therefore, she consented to be pointed at as the young lady who had been turned out of Greshamsbury because of the young squire. She had no help for it. But let them take care that they did not go beyond that. Outside those Greshamsbury gates she and Frank Gresham, she and Lady Arabella met on equal terms; let them each fight their own battle.

The squire kissed her forehead affectionately and took his leave, feeling, somehow, that he had been excused and pitied and made much of; whereas he had called on his

young neighbour with the intention of excusing, and pitying, and making much of her. He was not quite comfortable as he left the house; but, nevertheless, he was sufficiently honest-hearted to own to himself that Mary Thorne was a fine girl. Only that it was so absolutely necessary that Frank should marry money—and only, also, that poor Mary was such a birthless foundling in the world's esteem —only, but for these things, what a wife she would have made for that son of his!

To one person only did she talk freely on the subject, and that one was Patience Oriel; and even with her the freedom was rather of the mind than of the heart. She never said a word of her feeling with reference to Frank, but she said much of her position in the village, and of the necessity she was under to keep out of the way.

"It is very hard," said Patience, "that the offence should be all with him, and the punishment all with you."

"Oh, as for that," said Mary, laughing, "I will not confess to any offence, not yet to any punishment; certainly not to any punishment."

"It comes to the same thing in the end."

"No, not so, Patience; there is always some little sting of disgrace in punishment: now I am not going to hold myself as in the least disgraced."

"But, Mary, you must meet the Greshams sometimes."

"Meet them; I have not the slightest objection on earth to meet all, or any of them. They are not a whit dangerous to me, my dear. 'Tis I that am the wild beast, and 'tis they that must avoid me," and then she added, after a pause—slightly blushing—"I have not the slightest objection even to meet him if chance brings him in my way. Let them look to that. My undertaking goes no further than this, that I will not be seen within their gates."

But the girls so far understood each other that Patience undertook, rather than promised, to give Mary what assistance she could; and, despite Mary's bravado, she was in

such a position that she much wanted the assistance of such a friend as Miss Oriel.

After an absence of some six weeks, Frank, as we have seen, returned home. Nothing was said to him, except by Beatrice, as to these new Greshamsbury arrangements; and he, when he found Mary was not at the place, went boldly to the doctor's house to seek her. But it has been seen, also, that she discreetly kept out of his way. This she had thought fit to do when the time came, although she had been so ready with her boast that she had no objection on earth to meet him.

After that there had been the Christmas vacation, and Mary had again found discretion to be the better part of valour. This was doubtless disagreeable enough. She had no particular wish to spend her Christmas with Miss Oriel's aunt instead of at her uncle's fireside. Indeed, her Christmas festivities had hitherto always been kept at Greshamsbury; the doctor and herself having made a part of the family circle there assembled. This was out of the question now; and perhaps the absolute change to old Miss Oriel's house was better for her than the lesser change to her uncle's drawing-room. Besides, how could she have demeaned herself when she met Frank in their parish church? All this had been fully understood by Patience, and, therefore, had this Christmas visit been planned.

And then this affair of Frank and Mary Thorne ceased for a while to be talked of at Greshamsbury, for that other affair of Mr. Moffat and Augusta monopolized the rural attention. Augusta, as we have said, bore it well, and sustained the public gaze without much flinching. Her period of martyrdom, however, did not last long, for soon the news arrived of Frank's exploit in Pall Mall; and then the Greshamsburyites forgot to think much more of Augusta, being fully occupied in thinking of what Frank had done.

The tale, as it was first told, declared that Frank had followed Mr. Moffat up into his club; had dragged him thence

into the middle of Pall Mall, and had then slaughtered him on the spot. This was by degrees modified till a sobered fiction became generally prevalent, that Mr. Moffat was lying somewhere still alive, but with all his bones in a general state of compound fracture. This adventure again brought Frank into the ascendant, and restored to Mary her former position as the Greshamsbury heroine.

"One cannot wonder at his being very angry," said Beatrice, discussing the matter with Mary, very imprudently.

"Wonder—no; the wonder would have been if he had not been angry. One might have been quite sure that he would have been angry enough."

"I suppose it was not absolutely right for him to beat Mr. Moffat," said Beatrice, apologetically.

"Not right, Trichy? I think it was very right."

"Not to beat him so very much, Mary!"

"Oh, I suppose a man can't exactly stand measuring how much he does these things. I like your brother for what he has done, and I say so frankly—though I suppose I ought to eat my tongue out before I should say such a thing, eh, Trichy?"

"I don't know that there's any harm in that," said Beatrice, demurely. "If you both liked each other there would be no harm in that—if that was all."

"Wouldn't there?" said Mary, in a low tone of bantering satire; "that is so kind, Trichy, coming from you—from one of the family, you know."

"You are well aware, Mary, that if I could have my wishes—"

"Yes; I am well aware what a paragon of goodness you are. If you could have your way I should be admitted into heaven again; shouldn't I? Only with this proviso, that if a stray angel should ever whisper to me with bated breath, mistaking me, perchance, for one of his own class, I should be bound to close my ears to his whispering, and remind him humbly that I was only a poor mortal. You would trust me so far, wouldn't you, Trichy?"

"I would trust you in any way, Mary. But I think you are unkind in saying such things to me."

"Into whatever heaven I am admitted I will go only on this understanding: that I am to be as good an angel as any of those around me."

"But, Mary dear, why do you say this to me?"

"Because—because—because—ah me! Why, indeed, but because I have no one else to say it to. Certainly not because you have deserved it."

"It seems as though you were finding fault with me."

"And so I am; how can I do other than find fault? How can I help being sore? Trichy, you hardly realise my position; you hardly see how I am treated; how I am forced to allow myself to be treated without a sign of complaint. You don't see it all. If you did, you would not wonder that I should be sore."

Beatrice did not quite see it all; but she saw enough of it to know that Mary was to be pitied; so, instead of scolding her friend for being cross, she threw her arms round her and kissed her affectionately.

But the doctor all this time suffered much more than his niece did. He could not complain out loudly; he could not aver that his pet-lamb had been ill-treated; he could not even have the pleasure of openly quarrelling with Lady Arabella; but not the less did he feel it to be most cruel that Mary should have to live before the world as an outcast, because it had pleased Frank Gresham to fall in love with her.

But his bitterness was not chiefly against Frank. That Frank had been very foolish he could not but acknowledge; but it was a kind of folly for which the doctor was able to find excuse. For Lady Arabella's cold propriety he could find no excuse.

With the squire he had spoken no word on the subject up to this period of which we are now writing. With her ladyship he had never spoken on it since that day when she had told him that Mary was to come no more to Gres-

hamsbury. He never now dined or spent his evenings at Greshamsbury, and seldom was to be seen at the house, except when called in professionally. The squire, indeed, he frequently met; but he either did so in the village, or out on horseback, or at his own house.

When the doctor first heard that Sir Roger had lost his seat, and had returned to Boxall Hill, he resolved to go over and see him. But the visit was postponed from day to day, as visits are postponed which may be made any day, and he did not in fact go till he was summoned there somewhat peremptorily. A message was brought to him one evening to say that Sir Roger had been struck by paralysis, and that not a moment was to be lost.

"It always happens at night," said Mary, who had more sympathy for the living uncle whom she did know, than for that other dying uncle whom she did not know.

"What matters—there—just give me my scarf. In all probability I may not be home to-night—perhaps not till late to-morrow. God bless you, Mary;" and away the doctor went on his cold bleak ride to Boxall Hill.

"Who will be his heir?" As the doctor rode along he could not quite rid his mind of this question. The poor man now about to die had wealth enough to make many heirs. What if his heart should have softened towards his sister's child! What if Mary should be found in a few days to be possessed of such wealth that the Greshams should be again happy to welcome her at Greshamsbury!

The doctor was not a lover of money—and he did do his best to get rid of such pernicious thoughts. But his longings, perhaps, were not so much that Mary should be rich, as that she should have the power of heaping coals of fire on the heads of those people who had so injured her.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST

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